Four Corners Future Forum
Regional Economic Development Conference Report
Farmington, NM - November 2017

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 1 and 2, 2017, over 140 stakeholders from throughout the Four Corners Region gathered in Farmington, New Mexico to devise strategy to deal with the economic downturn caused by the decline of the energy sector, including oil, gas and coal, as part of the Four Corners Future Forum. This report endeavors to capture the major content of this event with some background material from lead-up sessions to the Forum that provides additional context and understanding. For the purposes of this endeavor, the Four Corners Region consists of the states of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and Utah as well as well as the four Tribal Nations of the Navajo, Jicarilla Apache, Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute, and the four Pueblo Tribes of Acoma, Laguna, Zuni and Hopi.

Although the energy sector is cyclical in nature, beginning in 2015, the economy of the Four Corners region started experiencing a major change due to a worldwide shift in the energy marketplace. Hydraulic fracturing, combined with new technologies used in horizontal drilling, allowed US companies to economically extract oil and gas from shale deposits deep underground, catapulting the US to the number one oil producing country in the world. An unintended consequence was a precipitous drop in the price of oil and gas from the glut of US production, playing havoc with the economies of oil and coal producing nations worldwide, in addition to oil and coal producing states and regions in the US, including the Four Corners.

The current price declines of oil and gas are almost unprecedented, with the industry experiencing the longest period of declining investment in nearly half a century. The low price of natural gas also impacted coal regions as utility companies started using natural gas to produce electricity instead of coal. There are parts of the country that are heavily dependent upon the oil and gas economy, and parts that are dependent upon coal. Some areas are dependent upon both. This is the case of the Four Corners Region. The decline of the coal economy is resulting in even more layoffs and economic dislocation than in the oil and gas sector, seriously impacting many vulnerable populations, including Tribal communities.

The oil and gas sectors are used to boom and bust cycles. According to one long-term resident, every time oil and gas declines politicians and economic leaders talk about promoting economic diversification. Then the economy improves, and things go back to the way they were until the next crisis hits. According to Cheryal Lee Hills and Arlene Jones, brought in from Central Minnesota’s Region 5 Development Commission by the Forum to tell us how they successfully confronted a similar situation, “an economic crisis is a terrible thing to waste”.

The organizers of the Four Corners Future Forum are determined “not to waste this crisis”. The sentiment from the beginning was not to coordinate “one more economic development conference”, but to ensure that this one would make a difference by
proactively engendering implementation to meet a challenging economic situation.

The federal government developed the POWER (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization) initiative as a collaborative program among federal agencies headed by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) to help communities impacted by the decline of regional coal industries adapt to the changing energy landscape and reposition their economies. Although most of the resources from the POWER Initiative have been flowing to the Appalachian region, the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments (COG) and San Juan College each applied for and received a POWER grant to retrain the local workforce and to fund an economic assessment study of the three-county area in Northwest New Mexico most impacted by the changes in the coal economy.

The POWER assessment study was completed by Highland Economics LLC out of Portland, Oregon, and Catalyst Environmental Solutions, with offices in Santa Monica, California. The POWER report has implications for the entire region and formed the initial underpinning for planning the Four Corners Future Forum.

A planning committee was organized with participation of the Northwest New Mexico COG, San Juan College, Four Corners Economic Development, Arizona Public Service Company Four Corners Power Plant, San Juan County, other regional government representatives, the Economic Development Administration and representation from area Tribes. A budget was put together from funds from the NM Council of Governments POWER Grant and from sponsor contributions, including Arizona Public Service Company (APS) and Four Corners Economic Development, along with substantial staff time and facility resources contributed by San Juan College and Four Corners Economic Development. Arvin Trujillo from APS and the Navajo Nation, Warren Unsicker from Four Corners Economic Development, Jeff Kiely from the Northwest NM COG, and Melissa Meechan from San Juan College made up the steering committee.

Representatives were also brought on board from Region 9 Economic Development District in Southwestern Colorado, the Northeast Arizona COG, and the Southeastern Association of Local Governments in Utah. Cota Holdings, a Native owned consulting firm that specializes in Indian energy and economic development was hired to facilitate and document the Forum.

The result was an extraordinary day and a half at San Juan College in Farmington with participants from the private sector, government, non-profits and Tribes from throughout the Four Corners.

Local speakers included former Mayor of Farmington and President of the Four Corners Economic Development Board, Tom Taylor, CEO of one of the area’s most successful locally owned energy companies, T. Gregg Merrion of Merrion Oil and Gas, San Juan College Vice-President of Student Services, David Eppich, and Kevin Cosby from APS. The Forum flew in Jeff Finkle from Washington D.C, president of the largest economic development organization in the world – the International Economic Development Council. Cheryal Lee Hills and Arlene Jones from Region 5 Development Commission were brought in to tell us how they spearheaded an “economic miracle” in Central Minnesota that was facing similar challenges. Cheryal and Arlene both agreed to continue to monitor and advise the Four Corners group.

Besides a successful conference, the support of a broad base of resources and incredible speakers, this economic development conference will make a difference due to several factors: This economic crisis is deeper and longer lasting with more serious ramifications than previous downturns; there is a solid group of committed and capable people behind this effort; and the effort is squarely focused upon a growing economic development dynamic that is particularly suited to the Four Corners – regionalism.

The advantages of a regional approach were brought home by the speakers - Hills, Jones, Eppich,
Taylor and Finkle. In guiding the Forum, the committee had decided on the theme – “Think regionally; Act locally”. The primary reason for the Forum was to deal proactively with the impact of the decline of the energy sector on livelihoods and public coffers in the context of the interconnectedness of the region.

The challenge that Four Corners economic development faces is to figure out how to diversify the economy while working with the energy sector to encourage its adaptation to a changing environment.

Regionalism has inherent advantages based on the potential to share resources, knowledge, creativity and experience. Cities have development advantages because a critical mass of human interaction and resources help to support creative ideas and businesses in a finite area. The way rural areas can compete is through banding together as a region to create that critical mass, but beyond that, regionalism also represents potential funding.

The strategy promoted by the Region 5 Development Commission team encompassed broad coalitions, inclusivity and local control with regional support. When projects are prioritized locally, but supported regionally, there is a greater chance for funding, with the result that over time, more resources flow into the entire region.

Opportunity sectors for economic diversification addressed in the breakout sessions were tourism, manufacturing, capacity building, infrastructure development, healthcare, agriculture, creative economy, technology, location neutral work and energy.

The Region 5 team emphasized that it was important to define what success looks like early on. Region 5 built a grass-roots, broad-based, inclusive coalition with an effective structure and roles that included people and stakeholders at “the margins” based upon WealthWorks - https://www.wealthworks.org/ methodology. Value propositions were articulated that met peoples' personal goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAPITAL</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>The existing stock of skills, understanding, physical health and mental wellness in a region's people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>The existing stock of knowledge, resourcefulness, creativity and innovation in a region's people, institutions, organizations and sectors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>The existing stock of trust, relationships and networks in a region’s population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>The existing stock of traditions, customs, ways of doing, and world views in a region’s population</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>The existing stock of goodwill, influence and power that people, organizations and institutions in the region can exercise in decision-making.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>The existing stock of natural resources—for example, water, land, air, plants and animals—in a region’s places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built</td>
<td>The existing stock of constructed infrastructure—for example, buildings, sewer systems, broadband, roads—in a region’s places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>The existing stock of monetary resources available in the region for investment in the region.</td>
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By helping communities focus on the eight primary forms of community capital, WealthWorks aims to advance a region’s overall prosperity and self-reliance, strengthen existing and emerging sectors, and increase jobs and incomes for lower-income residents and firms — all at the same time. WealthWorks offers a systematic approach that identifies enterprising opportunities in a region and engages a wide range of partners in turning those opportunities into results that both builds and captures wealth. It can complement or incorporate traditional economic development methods, but intentionally focuses on creating value that becomes rooted in local people, places and firms. WealthWorks methodology serves to tear down boundaries.

An example is building bridges across the many divisions that have historically divided and fragmented social and economic development efforts in the region, including the boundaries between Tribal and non-Tribal jurisdictions. Of particular strategic importance to the Four Corners Region, and as noted in the Forum’s background paper, Tribes are the only entities in the country that can act as both businesses and governments, with significant advantages in capitalization, taxation and marketing. Tribes can form joint-venture organizations with private companies and invest both on and off reservation. The potential for Tribes and communities to work together for economic development has only been minimally realized.

The Southern Ute Tribe in the Four Corners, for example, is one of the most sophisticated and wealthiest energy Tribes in the country with investments throughout the United States, but not outside of their reservation in the Four Corners, its own back yard. It may be of interest to the Southern Utes to consider potential investment opportunities in the Four Corners region if competitive investments can be structured.

Forum planners spent considerable time wrestling with issues of commonality and diversity across the Four Corners region. On the one hand, several factors are held in common by the region’s Tribal and non-Tribal communities, such as distance from metropolitan centers, remarkable geographical and cultural assets, the strong presence of indigenous nations, fragmentation of wealth across the population, and many decades of economic reliance on extractive industries. On the other hand, it was clear that each Four Corners sub-region is different. Northwest New Mexico faces challenges from the declines in oil, gas and coal, but is an area rich in energy and transmission capacity. Farmington is also a tourism hub and has an agricultural base. Northeast Arizona faces serious issues from the closure of coal mines and power plants.

The Navajo Nation Oil and Gas Company is active in southeastern Utah and dealing with price declines. Utah, however, has been experiencing a tourism boom. The region in the best economic shape is Southwest Colorado. Colorado Region 9, however, is very aware of how much money flows into their region from New Mexico.

The main lesson from the Forum is that the entire region is interdependent, and by working together across boundaries more can be accomplished. There is no escaping the fact that the region is in for challenging economic times, but the initiative that has
been started through the Forum with planned follow-up will catalyze strategic change to help lessen the economic pain and eventually bring back the economy stronger than before.

Forum leadership was aware, however, that planning alone does not create economic development. Jobs come into a region when companies or entrepreneurs believe that re-location or expansion within a given area is in their self-interest and decide to invest. Regional planning occurs within a global economic context that planning cannot control, but can respond to. Within that environment, planning can help lay the groundwork for an enhanced investment process to occur.

Planners can help decide what competitive advantages a region has and what may be lacking. Economic developers can help to bring public investment into a region to shore up infrastructure or to market an area and help take advantage of incentives for private investment if appropriate.

Jeff Finkle from the International Economic Development Council listed site selection criteria that influences corporate decision-making

- Qualified workforce
- Accessibility/transportation
- Infrastructure (including broadband)
- Diversity of population
- Quality of life/cost of living
- Energy availability

The Four Corners region is competitive within most of these areas. The central lesson of the Forum is that a regional dynamic enhances competitiveness in these and other areas and also serves to maximize public funding. A guiding principle used by the Region 5 team, which could be adapted to the Four Corners, was to keep project control and decision-making local. The regional strategy comes into play through regional resources supporting local initiatives.

Region 5 also used a well-defined, inclusive and effective structure, involving a small planning group, a larger advisory board made up of representatives from identified opportunity sectors, and project champions who represented specific projects on the ground in the sub-local regions. Communication was transparent and frequent, but formal meetings were short – primarily finding out where the champions were at and what they needed from the larger regional group to help local businesses succeed.

Finkle summed up a good deal of strategy by noting that regions are continuously impacted by recessions, disasters, the loss of a major employers, industry shifts, and technological transformations. Diversification strategies sustain the local economic base in the face of disruptions. Strategies include a range of activities, such as business recruitment, retention and expansion, workforce development, entrepreneurial development, promoting tourism and leveraging university capabilities.
There is no escaping the fact that the region is in for challenging economic times, but the initiative that has been started through the Forum with planned follow-up will catalyze strategic change to help to lessen the economic pain and eventually bring back the economy stronger than before.

Diversification efforts take time to plan and Implement, and should be based upon being proactive. Effective leadership, stakeholder buy-in and collaboration are vital factors. Collaborating regionally to drive a diversification effort requires a clear plan. Leadership must lead; roles must be defined; goals and strategies must be agreed upon; performance must be measured; and the most important factor is communication. Another effective strategy that comes from communication is matchmaking between potential employers and area opportunities.

At the same time, the Four Corners region can’t lose sight of the fact that energy has been its primary economic generator. There is substantial opportunity for the region to remain an energy center by pursuing new technologies and working with companies to help them adapt to the emerging 21st century energy dynamic.

As reflected in Mr. Finkle’s comments, economic development strategy is based upon recruitment, development and retention. Mr. Finkle admitted that in most economic development scenarios, efforts in business retention and expansion have been found to be more effective in job creation than industrial recruitment activities. Retention involves supporting existing businesses.

One popular approach in this regard is referred to as “economic gardening,” a business retention and expansion strategy initially developed in Littleton, Colorado during a time of recession. Economic Gardening connects entrepreneurs to resources, encouraging the development of essential infrastructure and providing entrepreneurs with needed information. The Littleton economic gardening initiative provides local entrepreneurs with access to competitive intelligence on markets, customers, and competitors comparable to the resources customarily only available to larger firms. Small to medium sized firms are the primary community job engines. Thriving firms make recruitment easier and spur the development of new business as part of the supply chain or by providing indirect goods and services to workers.

The Forum’s regional snapshots and the breakout sessions provided a “laundry list” of potential opportunities. Part of the challenge moving forward is to decide where to invest time and energy. In order to be effective, energy in the form of human capital needs focus. Remaining focused, starting small, celebrating small victories and growing organically is part of the strategic advice from Region 5.

The following are a few selected ideas and opportunities that were addressed as part of the Forum that that are not all inclusive, but may be worthy of further exploration and support.
Four Corners Future Forum

- **Automation** - Energy sector jobs are becoming automated. San Juan College is already developing courses for energy IT jobs. This should be supported, and linkages made with industry.
- **Shutdown Work** - There are new employment opportunities in shutting down wells and in environmental remediation.
- **Tribal Energy** - Tribally-owned energy assets and development can provide economic and financial advantages and should be supported. Tribal/private sector joint ventures that can take advantage of Tribal incentives are ways to recruit industry into the region with opportunity to market to the federal government.
- **Rail Service** - Pursue continued planning and potential investment in rail service into the San Juan Basin.
- **Logistics Hub** - The Gallup Energy Logistics Park represents an important venue and opportunity for significant economic investment in alignment with interstate and rail corridors traversing the southern portions of the Four Corners region, with implications for both McKinley and San Juan Counties.
- **Localized Business & Employment for Federal Projects** - Major funding and job opportunities may become available for the clean-up of uranium sites and in the construction and operation of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project. It is sometimes hard to keep the workforce for these kinds of project local, but efforts can start now in anticipation of these projects coming online.
- **LANL Technology TA** - A new Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) operations contract is out for bid. LANL direct economic development usually centers on the immediate region surrounding the Lab, but there may be an opportunity to work with the State to apply national lab expertise to working with regional energy companies on new innovative technology and equipment manufacturing, possibly through the NM Manufacturing Extension Partnership.
- **Regional Tourism** – There are many tourism agencies and initiatives in the region, but they can all benefit and have greater impact from regional collaboration, such as through the Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byways segments in the region, as well as the Four Corners Geotourism initiative spearheaded by National Geographic magazine.
- **Healthcare Workforce** - Health facilities have recently been expanded in Farmington. A trained workforce is called for. There are currently over 84 health related jobs listed in the Farmington area.
- **Regional Food Systems** – There is a high level of interest in the potential of agriculture as an economic driver in the region, including collaborative work in development of local and regional food systems. One or more regional food hubs may increase agricultural opportunities, which could include tapping into under-utilized commercial kitchen facilities for developing value-added food products.

At the same time, the Four Corners region can’t lose sight of its primary identity – energy. There is substantial opportunity for the region to remain an energy center by pursuing new technologies and working with companies to help them adapt to 21st century opportunities.
**Power Forward!**

*Emerging from the POWER Initiative’s Four Corners Future Forum was a broadly-shared commitment to continue the strategic effort together—as a region.*

**Next Steps:**

- **Report & Educate**: Complete a full report of the proceedings of the Forum and disseminate broadly; use the report for further communication, study and advocacy.

- **Regional Voice**: Meet with the four Congressional Delegation offices to present and discuss the report and start building a “Four Corners Caucus” approach to unified strategy and development.

- **Work Together**: Convene Strategic Theme Working Groups following Region 5 structure around Energy; Manufacturing; Agriculture; Infrastructure; Local/Regional Capacity-Building; Tourism; the Creative Economy; Technology; and Location-Neutral Work.

- **Regional Associations**: Building upon – and in concert with – the work of existing regional associations, work on formalizing and launching a Four Corners Regional Economic Consortium that speaks for the interests of the region’s communities and that sustainably carries forward the goals and initiatives from the Forum.

- **Website**: Develop, publish and manage a Website for the regional initiative.

- **Spring Work Session**: In March 2018, convene the group leaders of the Strategic Theme working groups.

- **Forum 2.0**: In July 2018, convene Forum 2.0 to report in on progress to date, set goals and targets going forward and galvanize broader participation in the regional effort.
Four Corners Future Forum - November 2017

**4 CORNERS FUTURE FORUM**
Planning Committee

**STEERING COMMITTEE**
- APS/4CPP (Arvin Trujillo)
- NWNMCOG (Jeff Kiely)
- SJ College (Melissa Meechan)
- 4CED (Warren Unsicker)
- Consultants to the Committee (Gota Holdings--Darien Cabral, Roger Fragua; Once A Day Marketing--Jim Glover)

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- San Juan County (Larry Hatheway)
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A new future economic development opportunity lies in the development of multi-state regional economic development initiatives. Cities, townships and counties coordinating economic development is not new. Many states can point to a regional economic development approach, but a true regional, economic development paradigm that recognizes different regional dependencies and supports mutual economic strategies is not common.

The current economic challenge in the Four Corners area brought about from the hollowing out of the traditional energy sectors of oil, gas and coal is the stimulus that brought NGO’s, government, private sector and Native American Tribes together in San Juan College in Farmington, New Mexico in an unprecedented effort to reach across boundaries to plan to resuscitate the regional economy. As our distinguished guests from Region 5 in Central Minnesota noted – “an economic crisis is a terrible thing to waste”.

The geography alone makes it particularly exciting to consider a regional approach in the Four Corners area, as nowhere else in the country are four states in such close proximity as to actually touch. When the Indian Nations and the Pueblo Tribes are included as sovereign entities, the potential for productive regional economic collaboration becomes extraordinary.

Economic regionalism becomes even more important when increasing trends towards urbanization are taken into account. The rate of urbanization has been increasing every year in the US for over a century. Rural areas are becoming less populated with less economic opportunity. In many parts of the country there is a rural economic crisis. The Four Corners area is decidedly rural, with the largest population center of Farmington consisting of just 46,000 people.

According to the British theoretical physicist, and former Director of the Santa Fe Institute, Geoffrey West, cities play an ever-growing role in providing a critical mass of humanity that leads to creative thinking and behavior fostering economic opportunity.

The economic prowess of rural areas is often dependent upon area specific extractive resources or natural beauty, which has certainly been the case in the Four Corners. The critical mass of human interaction that often manifests in an economic development strategy known as “cluster development” is that much more difficult to realize within rural environments.

Based upon natural resource extraction, energy has been the economic driver and “cluster” of the Four Corners region. The economic development challenge is to promote measures that will help to diversify the economy while working with the energy sector to encourage its adaptation to a changing environment.

Rural regionalism whereby people in disparate communities start to work together across borders and inspire one another is a model that can be used to great effect. Not wasting the “economic crisis”, whereby the Four Corners area becomes a rural economic development laboratory that can hold lessons for other parts of the country is one of the driving forces behind the Four Corners Future Forum. It will take the sustained efforts, energies and leadership of the Forum’s organizers and participants, along with the involvement and support of community members, the private sector, government and the NGO community throughout the region to bring the economic vision coming from this effort to reality.

This is why the significance of the Four Corners Future Forum, organized by a broad coalition of regional stakeholders and attended by over 140 people with the goal of developing effective regional economic development strategy cannot be underestimated.
Regionalism has inherent advantages based on the potential to share resources, knowledge, creativity and experience; but beyond that, it also represents potential funding. The Economic Development Administration (EDA) serves as a catalyst for assisting the Nation’s distressed communities in achieving long-term economic potential through strategic investment based upon local and regionally developed priorities. Whether federal funds are solicited from Commerce, including EDA, or from the USDA, HUD, SBA, DOE, Department of Labor or other federal agencies, a regional approach whereby a broad coalition of regional players support a singular local funding strategy is generally much more competitive than when local governments and economic development NGO’s attempt to go it alone. Because the region is mutually interdependent, and money and economics don’t stop at state lines or at the boundaries of Indian reservations, a well-planned regional approach can have the net effect of bringing more money into the region according to consensual priorities that will have the greatest impact.

In case anyone had any doubts about the effectiveness of a regional approach, Conference planners brought in Cheryal Lee Hills and Arlene Jones from the Region 5 Economic Development District in Central Minnesota. Region 5 created a collaborative, regional economic development methodology called Resilient Region, employing WealthWorks methodology and a locally developed system from lessons learned. The Resilient Region project brought back an economy suffering 15% unemployment, losing extractive industries, family farms and suffering from a multitude of social problems.

Cheryal and Arlene proved to the Conference participants that employing the right strategy can work. They spoke about how the lessons learned from Region 5 can successfully be applied in the Four Corners with its multiple counties, states and Tribes. This perspective was backed-up by a strong presentations on the effectiveness of a regional strategy from San Juan College’s own David Eppich and the President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Economic Development Council, Jeff Finkle.
Due to hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling in shale oil formations, the United States quickly surpassed Saudi Arabia and Russia as the top oil and natural gas producer in the world. The large supply of oil and gas coming mostly from US shale oil fields such as the Bakken in North Dakota, Eagle Ford in Texas, the Marcellus in the Pennsylvania region, the Williston Basin in North Dakota, Montana, and Canada, along with the Mancos Shale deposits in our own San Juan Basin, created a worldwide glut of oil and gas. This, together with declining demand due to a global economic slowdown, the emphasis on energy efficiency and the increasing competitiveness of renewable energy, caused prices of oil and natural gas to tank. Cheap natural gas combined with environmental regulations have driven utility companies to begin to shut-down more expensive coal power plants, replacing them with natural gas generation.

The second largest natural gas field in the world is the San Juan Basin, located in the Four Corners area. The San Juan Basin is the site of the first natural gas well in the United States, drilled in 1921. The first coal bed methane well was drilled in 1948, and after World War II, energy became the main economic driver of the region. Over 40,000 wells have been drilled in the San Juan Basin, helping to create a robust regional industry and thousands of high-paying skilled jobs.

The oil and gas sector is used to boom and bust cycles. However, the current price decline is almost unprecedented, with the industry experiencing the longest period of declining investment in nearly half a century. Prior to the price decline, the oil and gas industry ex-
pected a production boom and increasing revenues from hydraulic fracturing and horizontal drilling.

Due to the shale oil boom, the price of oil went from a high of $138 per barrel in July of 2008 to $27 at the beginning of 2016, before settling at the current price of approximately $60 per barrel. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the price of oil and gas will likely remain in the current range in the near future. The price of natural gas followed a similar trajectory. Oil and gas production companies have been shutting down wells, laying-off personnel and exiting the Four Corners region. Additionally, most of the regional power plants and coal mines are shut-down, partially shutdown, or scheduled for complete closure over the coming decade.

In 2016, Forbes Magazine ranked Farmington, New Mexico as the fastest shrinking city in the United States, with a population decline of close to 10% from 2010 to 2015. In addition, the Farmington area had the largest increase in its unemployment rate among 387 metropolitan areas nationwide in 2015. The city saw its unemployment rate rise 2.1 percentage points to 7.3% according to the U.S. Department of Labor.\(^2\)

Recently, there has been some stabilization. British Petroleum (BP) reversed the disinvestment trend in the San Juan Basin by bringing online a highly productive natural gas well in the Mancos Shale de-


\(^3\) Ellen Marks, Farmington unemployment increase largest in U.S, Albuquerque Journal, February 10th, 2016

posits, highlighting the potential of the New Mexico field to be a significant new source of the U.S. natural gas supply. Early production rates at the BP NEBU 602 Com 1H well are the highest achieved in the past 14 years within the San Juan Basin.

A number of companies are becoming more efficient and learning how to make money with oil at $50 per barrel. Hilcorp, one of the largest privately-held independent oil and natural gas exploration and production companies in the United States, for example, is buying San Juan Basin oil and gas assets at a discount and starting to put people back to work. Hilcorp’s business model is to leverage its core competencies and operational expertise to optimize oil and gas asset performance.

While the situation may show some signs of stabilization, no one expects the boom years propelled by $100 per barrel oil to return, and large layoffs have already occurred. Part of the energy sector challenge is to benefit from moving energy firmly into the 21st Century—that means more emphasis on IT and automation, emphasizing areas such as distributed generation and microgrids, renewable generation, storage technology, carbon sequestration, and emerging technologies, not just in renewables and clean energy sectors, but also in the oil, gas and coal sectors. There has been a lot of “hype” concerning “clean coal”, but with further technological advances it is a possibility. Coal can be used to produce a number of products not related to burning it, including liquefied fuel.
According to the Report, the mining and oil and gas sectors have provided around 6,000 jobs and $400 million in wages in just Cibola, McKinley, and San Juan Counties, the Four Corners New Mexico counties, from 2005 to 2015.

Investing in unproven new technologies, however, is risky at best. Nevertheless, once new technological advances do establish a foothold, the Four Corners can offer substantial advantages to companies. Advantages include a natural resource base, specialized infrastructure, including vast pipeline gathering and transportation networks, as well as power transmission lines that cross the country, support industries, educational institutions, and the potential to work with energy Tribes that can provide advantages to private sector companies, especially in areas of finance and marketing.

C. The San Juan Basin and the Coal Economy

Starting in 1963, one of the largest industrial developments in the country was initiated on the Colorado Plateau primarily in the Four Corners region of Arizona and New Mexico. The burgeoning metropolises of Los Angeles, Phoenix and Albuquerque spurred an immense need for power. Large coal deposits were found to exist in the Four Corners region far enough away from the cities so as not to produce pollution, but close enough to deliver cheap power. Over the next few decades power plants were built, and coal mines were opened to fuel them.

Several plants were constructed on Indian land, mostly on the Navajo Reservation. In some cases, Navajo people would walk on...
top of coal deposits and underneath power lines carrying electricity to California, while living in homes with no electricity or running water. Especially in the early days, Tribes would receive minimal compensation in the form of royalties. Later, the operating budgets of Tribes such as the Navajo and the Hopi became heavily dependent upon coal revenues and thousands of high paying jobs were created for Tribal members and non-Tribal members alike. After the Council of Energy Resource Tribes was formed in 1975, Tribes began to own and develop their own energy resources.

The Southern Ute Tribe in Southwestern Colorado on the northern end of the San Juan Basin, for example, became one of the most sophisticated and wealthiest oil and gas Tribes in the Country, with multi-billion-dollar funds and investments. The Jicarilla Apache Nation in New Mexico is the single largest mineral owner in the San Juan Basin with over 2,200 oil and gas wells drilled on Jicarilla Apache land. The Navajo Oil and Gas corporation, owned 100% by the Nation, has over 100 employees in St. Michaels, Arizona and owns and operates oil and natural gas interests, primarily in the San Juan Basin in New Mexico and in fields in southeastern Utah.

The threats to the regional coal economy presents even more of an economic challenge to the region than the decline of oil and gas. As of 2010, New Mexico coal production came to over 23 million tons, creating more jobs and revenues for the state than any other mineral commodity, with annual production values exceeding $750 million and payroll of over $100 million with more than 1,500 people employed. Major New Mexico coal mines in the Four Corners region included the San Juan Mine, the Navajo Mine, the McKinley Mine, the Lee Ranch Mine and El Segundo Mine. Four Corners coal mines in Arizona are comprised of the Black Mesa Mines in the Kayenta area of Arizona. The Black Mesa Mines are located on a specially designated joint-use area of the Navajo and Hopi Reservations.

Coal from the regional mines have been providing fuel for area power plants. The San Juan plant is scheduled to close in 2022; the Cholla plant is planned to shut down completely in 2025; the Navajo Generating Station is planned for retirement in 2019; the Four Corners Power Plant was partially shut-down in 2013; the McKinley Mine closed in 2009; agreements to sell San Juan Mine coal are expiring in 2022; Navajo Mine closure could come in the next several years; the Lee Ranch Mine has suspended operations; Black Mesa Mine operations were suspended in 2005; the Mojave Plant was dismantled in 2010. The coal mines and power generating stations closures represent the loss of thousands of high-paying jobs for skilled individuals in rural areas where there are few alternative employment opportunities, not to mention the ripple effects in support industries and the general economy.

D. The POWER Report

In order to begin to deal with the economic hardship afflicting the Four Corners area, the Northwest Council of Governments based in Gallup, New Mexico was able to commission a report with funding from the US Economic

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4 New Mexico State Energy, Minerals and Natural Resource Department - http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/MMD/Coal-FAQs.html - October 2017
The sentiment from the beginning was not to coordinate “one more economic development conference”, but to ensure that this one would make a difference in proactively engendering implementation to meet a challenging economic situation.

Development Administration (EDA) published in February 2017 by Highland Economics, LLC from Portland, Oregon, and Catalyst with offices in California titled “Regional Economic Assessment & Strategy for the Coal-Impacted Four Corners Region”, also known as the POWER Report. The POWER (Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization) initiative is a collaborative program among federal agencies headed by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) to help communities impacted by the decline of regional coal industries adapt to the changing energy landscape and reposition their economies.

According to the Report, the mining and oil and gas sectors have provided around 6,000 jobs and $400 million in wages in just Cibola, McKinley, and San Juan Counties, the Four Corners New Mexico counties covered in the report, from 2005 to 2015. Key adverse impact findings from the report in the three-county area over the next few years include the following:

- Direct employment and income in the coal mining and power generation sectors are anticipated to decline by approximately 930 jobs and $122.1 million in income annually.
- Total employment and income impacts, including indirect and induced ripple effects in other economic sectors, are estimated at 2,260 to 3,180 jobs and $195.2 to $213.3 million in annual income.
- Tax receipts to all levels of local, tribal, and state government that are directly related to coal extraction are expected to fall by $43.3 million.

The above figures are now expected to be even higher.

The Report documents the findings of its own strategic planning process and delineates information in the following areas:

- Type and Magnitude of Adverse Economic Impact
- Regional and Community Strategies for Mitigating Economic Impact
- Energy Sector Opportunities for Coal and Other Energy Assets
- Other Sector Economic Diversification Opportunities
- Recommended Priority Actions and Next Steps

Mitigation strategies that are discussed include:

- Workforce development
- Enhancing quality of life
- Nurturing local regional networks and state partnerships
- Investing in regional branding initiatives
- Developing a shared vision for the path forward.
- Supporting existing businesses and enterprises in the energy sector
- Supporting targeted investments and efforts to diversify the regional economy.
The following are key cluster opportunities with growth potential for economic diversification that have been built into the agenda of the Forum from the POWER Report:

- Retail
- Health care
- Energy
- Tourism
- Agriculture and food
- Manufacturing
- Logistics and transportation
- Construction

The Forum added:

- Outdoor recreation
- Technology and location neutral
- Creative economy
- Capacity building, which encompassed infrastructure, workforce development and education

The POWER Report lists actions to develop the economic cluster areas. Part of the challenge that the Forum Planning group will have is to decide which areas deserve human energy, resources and efforts, and which areas will create the most “bang” for the resources consumed. That will depend in part on finding economic champions and entrepreneurs who are motivated to develop specific sectors. The Report also provides examples in this country and in other parts of the world where economic planning has had, or is having an impact.

Some of the general development strategies mentioned in the report include:

- Invest in entrepreneurial and business development strategies that strengthen the economy
- Improve the education, knowledge, skills, and health of residents to work and succeed
- Invest in critical infrastructure
- Leverage the Region’s natural and cultural heritage assets
- Build the capacity and skills of current and next-generation leaders and organizations

The POWER report is a valuable document that can provide informational underpinnings for planning direction and implementation.

San Juan College, Farmington, NM
As an outgrowth of the POWER report, the NorthWest New Mexico COG began working with Four Corners regional partners to plan the next step – a regionwide economic development forum that would inspire people to work together and lay the groundwork for the various organizations and individuals involved to become proactive in addressing the challenging economic environment. Planning for the forum got started in earnest in the first quarter of this year (2017).

The sentiment from the beginning was not to coordinate “one more economic development conference”, but to ensure that this one would make a difference in proactively en-gendering implementation to meet a challenging economic situation. Planning meetings were scheduled biweekly with the involvement of San Juan College, Arizona Public Service Company, San Juan County, Four Corners Economic Development, the Economic Development Administration and local government representatives. It was decided to work regionally with the four states as well as Tribes. Representatives were brought on board from Region 9 Economic Development District in Southwestern Colorado, the Northeast Arizona COG, and the Southeastern Association of Local Governments in Utah. Two of the planning committee members were Native American and served to represent Tribal interests. The theme for the forum adopted by the Planning Committee was - “think regionally, act locally”.

Committees, tasks, a budget, sponsorships and schedules were set up to plan for the Forum. A first iteration of an agenda was put together. A concerted effort was made to have broad regional representation at the Forum with representatives from the various geographical areas in addition to Tribes, as well as balanced representation from the private sector, government and economic development organizations. It was decided to schedule breakout sessions according to a modified version of the “opportunity sectors” listed in the POWER Report. Guest speakers were invited who would bring an inspiring message and inform the group as to what had worked in other parts of the country where similar challenges were faced.

It was decided that the Forum would be a day and a half event, held on November 1 and 2, 2017, with a reception scheduled for the evening of the first day at the Convention Center of the Marriott Courtyard in Farmington, and a focused planning session for those who would volunteer to stay on the second day. The Forum was to be held at the Henderson Fine Arts Center at San Juan College in Farmington, NM.

The Agenda (provided in the Appendix) contained the following elements. Welcomes from the Forum facilitator, Roger Fragua, and from the President of San Juan College, Dr. Toni...
On a more serious note, it was brought out that the real reason for the Forum is to deal proactively with the impact of the decline of the energy industry on livelihoods and public coffers in the context of the interconnectedness of the region.

Prior to the Forum dates, sub-regional meetings and discussions were held with representatives from the four states and area Tribes in acknowledgment of the fact that each region faces different issues and opportunities. A priority of the effort moving forward will be to keep decision-making and responsiveness local, while working with the entire region to help move local initiatives forward. Short summaries of the regional meetings and discussions were presented by representatives from each of the sub-regions as regional snapshots.

During the lunch break, the Forum participants heard from three distinguished keynote speakers: Jeff Finkle, President of the International Economic Development Council, the largest national and global organization of its kind serving over 5,000 members worldwide, based in Washington D.C.; Kevin Cosby, Four Corners Power Plant Manager; and T. Gregg Merrion, CEO of Merrion Oil & Gas, a successful, locally owned oil and gas company based in Farmington.

The rest of the day focused on 10 breakout sessions (with energy and capacity repeated) formed around potential identified opportunity sectors with designated facilitators:

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The breakout sessions were structured around the above format.

After a reception in the evening, day-two began with a recap of the previous day and another presentation by Cheryal Lee Hills and Arlene Jones, sharing their insights and providing advice and encouragement about what they had observed at the Forum.
That was followed by a panel presentation with: David Eppich, Vice-President of Student Services at San Juan College; Tom Taylor, President of Four Corners Economic Development and former Mayor of the City of Farmington; and Jeff Kiely, Director of the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments.

David Eppich provided a rousing presentation on the dynamics of successful regional economic development strategy, with information on the development history of the Four Corners area, and why a regional approach can work here. Tom Taylor kept the audience’s attention rapt with a humorous and informative talk on his economic development experiences when he was Mayor of Farmington; and Jeff Kiely helped to bring closure to the event by bringing us back to its ultimate purpose and how best to move forward. The Forum was adjourned by Roger Fragua of Cota Holdings. About fifty people stayed for a couple of more hours after the Forum was officially over to talk about how best to plan to achieve identified goals.

The remainder of this report encapsulates the major content of this event with some background material from some of the lead-up sessions to the Forum that provides additional context and understanding.

B. Opening Remarks and Region 5 (Minnesota)

Dr. Pendergrass welcomed all to San Juan College, and noted that the school has 15,000 students. San Juan College is the number two college in the nation for Native Americans students who complete Associate Degrees. San Juan College School of Energy is also a national model for industry and academic cooperation. San Juan College supports a program in which students receive workforce training in the oil and gas industry with courses tailored to industry needs with an exemplary hiring track record.

The opening panel discussed the POWER grant afforded to coal impacted communities, the organization of the Forum, and the potential for subsequent funding. Most of the federal resources to date to deal with the demise of the coal economy are going to the Appalachian region. There is a need for the federal government to extend benefits to coal impacted areas west of the Mississippi.

The theme of the Forum was clearly about regionalism, and this was evident within the opening remarks. The Four Corners region has an amazing amount of diversity. However, “Together we are stronger, smarter and more competitive.” The first concrete suggestion coming out of the Forum was made by Jeff Kiely, suggesting that the Four Corners incorporate a new state – AZUNMCO – and elect Tom Taylor (former Mayor of Farmington) as Governor. On a more serious note, it was brought out that the real reason for the Forum is to deal proactively with the impact of the decline of the energy industry on livelihoods and public coffers in the context of the interconnectedness of the region.
One thing that the Resilient Region Sustainable Development Plan did was to get people from the variety of economic development sectors to communicate with each other so that agencies and organizations could plan in an interconnected way, and in a way whereby sector plans complemented each other.

Cheryal Lee Hills, Director of Region 5 Economic Development District in Central Minnesota was introduced along with Arlene Jones who is the Director of the Sprouts Food Hub, one of the more successful food hub projects in the country, and one of the projects to come out of Region 5’s Resilient Region initiative.

When the Resilient Region Project was initiated in 2012, extractive industries were shutting down, family farms were disappearing, unemployment was over 15%, and there was serious out-migration. Nearby areas, however, were experiencing some of the fastest growth in the Nation. There were social problems, including health issues, obesity and opioid addiction. All five of Region 5 counties were categorized as economically distressed. The Region 5 Resilient Region initiative started with a regional economic development plan funded by HUD to deal with the acute economic problems that the region was facing. The region had never gone through a planning process before. During that period, the only growing economic sector was government.

The Resilient Region Initiative engaged local Tribes, including the Ojibwa, but that engagement was not as successful as had been hoped for. With hindsight, however, much had been learned. Local Tribes suffer from high unemployment and high teen suicide. Through a learning process Tribes became more involved to the benefit of all concerned.

The Region 5 team emphasized that it was important to define what success looks like early on. Region 5 built a broad-based, inclusive and effective coalition that included people and stakeholders at “the margins”. The Resilient Region initiative used the Wealth Works (https://www.wealthworks.org/) model of economic development to effectively bring back their region.

Value propositions were articulated that met peoples’ personal goals. Youth was motivated in by ensuring that their voices were heard. Even the so called “doomsday group” was listened to and invited to be part of the process. Regional meetings were coordinated, sometimes held in bars and churches. People from all walks of life were encouraged to attend. “High-touch” dynamics and personal emails were important parts of fostering inclusivity. Engagement was based upon what people were willing to do to move forward together. Funding followed strategy, consensus decision-making and broad-based inclusion.

The coalition was effective in “magnetizing” new resources, including from the private sector, federal grants and state resources. Over a period from 2012 to 2015, the Resilient Region Initiative was able to bring in close to $45 million of grant and other funding.

Cheryal and Arlene emphasized the need for long-term engagement, and consequently, the need to structure development dynamics around local resources and people. The Region 5 COG brought together parties, such as the NTC Broadband Coalition and environmental and housing organizations that had never worked together previously. They managed to avoid turf issues. Relationships were built on trust. Initial organiza-
tions acted as liaisons to involve others. Buzzwords and concepts used by the team included cross-pollination, connectivity, finding regional perspectives and exploiting regional synergies. Economic development is not just about jobs and business, it is also about housing, health, food security, creativity, quality of life, education, infrastructure, “thinking out of the box” and many other factors.

A guiding principal used by the Resilient Region team was to keep project control and decision-making local, as local groups and businesses do not want to be told what they should be doing by people from the outside. The regional strategy comes into play through regional resources supporting local initiatives.

People self-identified as champions in regional meetings around theme areas and took on leadership roles. The regional effort now has 50 champions. Regional meetings were held quarterly. Information as to what other groups were doing was shared and brainstorming took place. Regional meetings and champions fed information to the core team and an Advisory Board. Cheryal served as project manager, but regions owned their own agendas. Local control was never jeopardized.

A core team of eight people drove the Resilient agenda, but worked closely with an advisory committee of 22 people. The advisory group was broad-based and diverse and included people from the private, non-profit and public sectors. Care was taken to involve people on the advisory board from the “opportunity sectors”. The advisory group provided oversight and helped to chart direction.

When Region 5 took over there was no regional plan. A plan was imperative. Region 5 committed a good deal of staff time to the project for over two years. Region 5 would call meetings, organize communication and manage the website. Meetings were structured around theme areas. Each theme area had 4 to 5 champions. In the regional meetings, Champions provided two-minute reports, including challenges, solicited ideas and suggestions and then moved on. The last part of the meeting consisted of networking. Networking included updates, and answers to the question, “what do you need from us”, ideas to help each other, and deeper dives into theme areas. There was a consistent emphasis on inclusion and how to increase the quality of life for all. Many people came from places of vulnerability. They felt that their voices mattered.

The Wealth Works resiliency methodology (https://www.wealthworks.org) is about creating a strong economy that can withstand economic shocks and bounce back. This is done by forming a diverse economy that is not overly dependent upon one sector. WealthWorks offers a systematic approach that identifies enterprising opportunities in a region and engages a wide range of partners in turning those opportunities into results that both build and capture wealth. It can complement or incorporate traditional economic development methods, but intentionally focuses on creating more value that becomes rooted in local people, places and firms. WealthWorks aims to advance a region’s overall prosperity and self-reliance, strengthen existing and emerging sectors, and increase jobs and incomes for residents and firms, including for low-income residents. It can work for people, firms and places at all success levels.

One thing that the Resilient Region Sustainable Development Plan did was to get people from the variety of economic development sectors to communicate with each other so that agen-
cies and organizations could plan in an interconnected way, and in a way whereby sector plans complemented each other. Ideas were asked for. Information, including financial information, was shared. Conference calls were coordinated along with biannual meetings. The Advisory Committee helped to foster increased involvement. Like people invited like people to be a part of the process. The most important factor to keep people involved was “deep listening”. Parts of the Resilient Region strategy included being proactive, not reactive, maintaining inclusivity and recognizing fear.

The Region 5 team spoke about how it’s important to promote and celebrate early wins, and how important it is to give praise (“strokes”). The Region 5 effort did have plans and data, but the process was not data driven. Not that much data was shared. The focus was more about asking “what do we want to accomplish” and “what matters to you”. Questions were asked about how to address challenges. Early wins came around local food, culture, broadband and art. Money was not an obstacle. Failure was not an option. There was no time to “plan to plan”. Process did not get in the way of program.

The Sprouts Food Hub in Little Falls, Minnesota, directed by Arlene Jones, is a good example of a grass roots economic development project that takes advantage of economic trends in agriculture, as well as a local opportunity sector and has become a resounding success. There are over 300 food hubs in the country. The Sprouts Food Hub is the only one that is rural to rural – the growers are rural, and the food hub supplies a rural market. Most food hubs market to urban areas.

A food hub is a product aggregation facility to which small farmers bring naturally raised local produce. Food is processed, graded for quality, packaged and marketed to institutional buyers such as restaurants, groceries, cafeterias and schools. Consumers prefer fresh, locally grown, naturally produced food that hasn’t been sitting in cold storage for days or weeks and shipped thousands of miles which is normally the case with most of the food that we buy. Naturally grown food from bio-diverse, local small farms that moves quickly from farm to plate normally commands a price premium and is in high demand.

Institutional food purveyors prefer to cater to customer demand, but cannot conveniently buy in small quantities from a myriad of local farmers. Food hubs fill this gap as an intermediary that allows small farmers to sell in greater quantities to meet a growing demand that otherwise they could not fulfill by themselves. Among other customers the Sprouts Food Hub sells through hospitals that actually write prescriptions for patients to get freshly grown, nutritious food. Another customer is local schools.

During the Region 5 team’s second presentation, a concern was brought up regarding the applicability of grass-roots, small-scale economic development in the Four Corners region when the region is confronting the loss of so many high-paying, skilled specialty jobs. Cheryal’s answer was “yes”. Food Hub
and”. Small farming, creating and selling art and other similar endeavors, are not meant to replace a strategy that focuses on retaining and building high-tech and industry opportunities, but rather to coexist with them. The important lessons from the Region 5 presenters are that much of the grass roots, collaborative dynamics Region 5 used to grow the economy in their region are just as applicable within the industrial sector as they are to small farmers and artists. This may become clearer from some of the examples provided in the breakout sessions.

C. Regional Snapshots

As part of the planning leading up to the Four Corners Future Forum, several sub-regional meetings and discussions were held acknowledging the diversity within the local areas that make up the Four Corners region. The sub-regional meetings were also meant to acknowledge the importance of local control and local priorities within a regional process. Sub-regional meeting facilitators presented regional snapshots to the forum.

Northwest New Mexico – Warren Unsicker, Jeff Kiely
Southwest Colorado – Donna Graves
Northeast Arizona - Chris Fetzer
Southeast Utah - Geri Gamber
Regional Tribes and Pueblos – Arvin Trujillo, Roger Fragua

The most heavily impacted areas from a standpoint of dependence upon the traditional energy sectors include the areas surrounding the San Juan Basin, including Farmington. Additional high-impact has come and will increasingly come from the power plant and mine closures, that primarily impact rural areas of San Juan, McKinley and Cibola Counties in New Mexico, as well as the Black Mesa and Kayenta Mine closures in La Paz County of Northeast Arizona.

1. NorthWest New Mexico

There are several strategic projects on the drawing board in the New Mexico Four Corners region with the potential to impact the area economy. The San Juan Basin region has long considered freight rail a strategic priority. Connection to the BNSF Transcontinental Railway from San Juan County, if implemented, would vastly expand economic opportunities for private industry, railroads, Tribes and government entities. The project is in preliminary stages, but could impact the entire region. Rail service can reduce shipping costs of industrial and agricultural products and spur investment in new or expanding regional industries.

The Arizona Public Service (APS) Foundation is working with six Navajo Chapters close to the San Juan Generating Station on economic development planning, in
Northwest New Mexico

**Key attributes**
- Mancos Shale mineral assets
- Threats to our coal industry
- Major retail hub for over 300,000 residents
- World renowned cultural and outdoor adventure sites

**Key Assets**
- Low Energy Costs
- Power transmission
- San Juan Regional Medical Center
- First certified Work Ready Community
- San Juan College
- Airport with tower, two runways
- Outstanding outdoor treasures

**Suggested Projects**
- New national signature programs at the college
- Land-link program
- Rural broadband/cellular wireless network
- Create a food incubator
- Center for Aviation Excellence
- Airport/College

**Diversification Potential**
- Agriculture: NAPI
- Education: San Juan College/K-12
- Energy: Oil/Gas/Coal/Solar/Transmission
- Healthcare: San Juan Regional Medical Center
- Location Neutral: Server Farms/Back Office
- Manufacturing: Military/Oil field/Other
- Tourism/Adventure Travel
- Transportation: Airport/rail
**What we want to do**

★ **Build the Nexus:** Energy-Logistics-Manufacturing  
 ★ Transloading Infrastructure  
 ★ Railroad Book of Business  
 ★ Inland Port  
 ★ Trucker Accommodations  
 ★ Transition Strategy for Coal/Power Industry Assets

★ **Be the Place:** Downtowns, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation  
 ★ Quality of Life Facilities, Amenities & Attractions  
 ★ Build Local, Grow Local, Buy & Sell Local, Hire Local  
 ★ Fill the downtowns with businesses, cultural events, activities & safe spaces  
 ★ Market our strengths & attractions, and then Be There  
 ★ The Great Outdoors: New Economic Opportunity in Outdoor Recreation  
 ★ Upgraded Infrastructure: Aesthetics, Safety, Broadband, Housing

★ **Keep ‘em Home:** Train here, Work here, Live here  
 ★ SoloWorks: Work Local, Get Paid from Outside  
 ★ Economic-Base Jobs: Buy One/Get One Free  
 ★ Entrepreneurship: Make Local Business Startup, Retention & Expansion a Priority  
 ★ Generations: Build Youth Leadership, Create Millennial-Friendly Communities, Adapt-Adapt-Adapt!  
 ★ Housing: Build Our Own—Innovate in Affordable, Adaptive, Context-sensitive and Sustainable Homes for Current & Future Residents  
 ★ Agriculture: Local/Regional Food Systems

★ **Grow the Talent Pool:** Educational & Workforce Excellence  
 ★ Pre-K-12: Keep Improving; Get Innovative; Get & Keep the Best Administrators & Teachers; Adapt to the 21st Century  
 ★ Higher Education & Training: Expand Access, Adapt & Innovate, Strengthen Linkages to Industry  
 ★ Service Learning: Serve the Community while Learning Knowledge, Skills & Values
anticipation of potential shutdown of the area’s power plants. Likewise, Four Corners Economic Development is diligently working with key stakeholders on the potential threat. These efforts need to be integrated into the regional endeavor.

Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation has also partnered with major property investor and developer Gallup Land Partners to establish the Gallup Energy Logistics Park, LLC (GELP) on lands bordering the City of Gallup at its northwestern borders. GELP is a rail-served industrial park located to serve the light manufacturing, storage, trans-loading, and logistics industries of northwest New Mexico, the San Juan Energy Basin, and the Four Corners Region. The site has been designated as a BNSF ‘Certified Site” for locating employers from BNSF’s book of business, with many possibilities for business attraction.

The Northwest New Mexico CEDS plan identifies a number of specific opportunities including: training the local workforce for work in the cleanup of legacy uranium sites and in the construction and operation of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project. Additional opportunities include the potential for new development of uranium mining, energy cluster development – including renewables - enhancing the regulatory environment; supporting the healthcare industries with educational and training programs, and plans for new healthcare facilities.

The tourism cluster, including cultural and adventure tourism, eco-tourism, heritage tourism, hospitality and accommodation services, outdoor attractions and services, and outdoor recreation equipment businesses, among other components, hold considerable promise. Event and destination marketing plays a role in developing tourism-related business. A potentially powerful marketing tool is the designation of the Four Corners by National Geographic Magazine as one of its 17 “geotourism” sites, for which it has developed hard copy and electronic maps and links to “authentic” area businesses, archaeological sites, geographical wonders, and cultural resources (see www.4cornersgeotourism.com).

Tourism is an area where great strides have been made in regional coordination, forming initiatives and partnerships upon which future developments can build. Plans for developing the tourism cluster should integrate all the various corridor management and tourism plans developed in the region. Initiatives include the Ancient Way Arts Trail, the Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byway, Adventure Gallup and Beyond, Cebolleta and Cubero Land Grant tourism initiatives, and
Gallup’s tourism strategy organized under the coordination of the City of Gallup and the Gallup-McKinley County Chamber of Commerce in affiliation with the State of New Mexico’s branding program, *New Mexico True*. San Juan County has also identified key strategic assets in tourism that it is working to implement. The Farmington Convention & Visitors Bureau, in partnership with numerous community leaders/agencies including Four Corners Economic Development, has formed committees to bolster the tourism allure of the region which is central to over a hundred cultural sites and destinations.

The Native American arts and culture sector creates a nexus between tourism and retail. The NAEDIS “New Mexico Creates” project, tourism/byway promotions, Native Arts authenticity, and Artist Web Promotion New Markets initiatives all have potential for further development. Downtown development and revitalization projects throughout the region also promise to support new local business development and increased tourism. Robust planning and development efforts are underway under the umbrellas of the Farmington Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA), Grants MainStreet, Zuni MainStreet, Aztec MainStreet, and the Downtown Gallup coalition that includes a Business Improvement District, MainStreet program, Arts & Culture District, and Metropolitan Redevelopment Area.

**What/who is Region 9?**

Southwest Colorado, Region 9 is not experiencing the type of economic dislocation going on in northwest New Mexico or Northeastern Arizona. Unemployment in all five Region 9 counties continue to decline. Across the nation, the unemployment rate was at its peak in 2010 and the unemployment rates have fallen steadily since then. Dolores County has seen the most dramatic decline, falling about 14% in five years, followed closely by San Juan County. La Plata and Dolores unemployment rates are below the state and nationwide average. The other counties in Region 9 are experiencing falling unemployment rates as well. Given the low rates of unemployment in the region, it is reasonable to expect that most of the economies are close to, or above, the “full em-
"employment" level of unemployment. That is the unemployment rate that is consistent with the long run "natural" rate of unemployment. Colorado per capita income is also above the national average.

The largest city in Region 9 is Durango, with a population of about 17,000. Durango is less than one hour north of Farmington by car, so is in commuting distance. Durango is a major tourism, hospitality center for the entire region. Region 9 has considerable areas of scenic beauty, along with ski areas. Despite the small size of Durango, unlike Farmington, the airport has scheduled commercial flights. Anyone wanting to fly in or out of Farmington goes through Durango.

The overall feel of Durango is of a resort community with tourist class hotels, many restaurants and shops and the Silverton-Durango Narrow Gauge Scenic Railway, which is a major tourist draw. Farmington, by contrast, has more of an industrial feel. However, the Region 9 organization is very aware that the Farmington/Durango economies are linked, and a lot of money earned in Farmington is spent in Durango. The more rural counties of Region 9 are not seeing as much business activity as in Durango, but the entire region is in much better economic shape than much of the rest of the Four Corners area. Many retired people live in the Region 9 area. Farmington, by contrast, is a working city.

Region 9 developed a survey instrument that was distributed to economic leaders from NGO’s, government and the private sector. Respondents ranked the following sectors as significant areas for development in the following order:

- Technology
- Tourism
- Education
- Healthcare
- Energy
- Transportation for people
- Agriculture and food processing

Technology, tourism and energy were identified as likely to garner the most political and funding support. Technology ranked lowest for having a trained workforce. Technology, tourism and education were considered the best candidates for inter-state collaboration. Additional areas singled out for collaboration potential included manufacturing, culture and arts, construction and working with Tribes, especially the Southern Ute.
Region 9 strengths include:

- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Support for entrepreneurs
- Diversity and beauty of landscape
- Scenic beauty (agricultural and public lands)
- Local cultural, historical assets
- Small-town living and lifestyle
- Recreational opportunities
- Fort Lewis College & other institutions of higher learning
- Climate
- Retirees that bring assets such as pensions

Weaknesses are:

- Few opportunities for jobs, higher wages
- Economies that are highly dependent on one or two sectors or seasons
- Loss of open space and a decline in the agriculture sector (related issues)
- Lack of telecommunications infrastructure in the outlying areas
- Lack of available technically trained workforce
- Housing, healthcare and childcare costs - challenge business retention and relocation
- Inadequate public infrastructure in some areas
- Lack of resources to deal with the most challenging issues (e.g. housing and other infrastructure needs)

Opportunities include:

- Tourist destination with major attractions
- Availability of air service
- Value-added marketing, strategies for enhancing agriculture
- Development of business incubators
- Healthy Lifestyles of residents
- Amenity migration ~ people want to live and work here
- Growing number of home based businesses
- Widely diverse, well-educated population
- Networking among companies for mutual support and benefit.

3. Northeastern Arizona

The following information comes primarily from the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan for the Lake Powell area completed in 2017. Important regional economic drivers that are in jeopardy include the Navajo Generating Station and the Kayenta Coal Mine. Northeastern Arizona is heavily impacted by the Navajo Nation. Tourism is a major economic driver. The shutdown of the Navajo Generating Station will have a dramatic impact on the region.
The broad region will suffer economically, including the community of Page, the Western Navajo Nation and the Hopi Tribe. The economics of the region are based upon tourism with considerable scenic beauty, especially around Lake Powell, the Grand Canyon and in Indian Country. Industry has been very limited.

The industry that does exist includes Page Steel and Yamamoto Bait Company in the town of Page. The area suffers from limited transportation and connectivity. Local Navajo communities depend upon Page for retail and other services. Kanab, Utah is tied to the region through tourism. Southern Utah has been experiencing a tourism boom.

Many residents of Page came with the building of the Glen Canyon Dam in the 60’s. Housing stock in the region is limited and there are many mobile homes.

Regional strengths include the natural environment with spectacular scenery. Visitors come for cultural history and scenic beauty. There is a strong workforce skilled in education, health care, trades and artistry, as well as a livestock industry.

Identified opportunities include the following:

- Education and business entrepreneurship
- History and culture
- Agriculture/cattle/sheep
- Water usage by NGS that will be available
- Improve agricultural skills and practices
- New markets for wool through improving wool quality
- Alternative energy
- Growth of tourism by improving guest services
- Local feed lot
- Facilities for movies

One opportunity concerns converting visitors to residents. There are 2,200 hotel rooms in Page and 435 in Kanab.

Regional threats include:

- Limited vision for growth
- Isolation
- Weak air transportation
- Infrastructure maintenance
- Lack of property rights
- Lack of good land management
- Long commutes
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Lack of opportunities for children who pursue education to return
- Aging population
- Navajo Nation business competition
- Lack of in-town activities
Page / Kanab recommendations center primarily on tourism and include:

- Create a broader sense of understanding and acceptance between cultures.
- Foster stronger sense of community and inclusiveness.
- Improve visitor repeat visits from 21% to +50%
- Focus Downtown Page as an attraction
- ID a primary location as a permanent “Town Common”
- Embrace a walkable streetscape
- Use design process as a unifying activity within the community
- Center of Town attractions for both residents and visitors
- Improve identity
  - Rebrand as a destination vs “stop along the way”
  - New attractions such as Astro – tourism
  - Foster an environment that is welcoming to all
- Cross Market the entire region

Other recommendations include:

- Build the communities by attracting new light industry
  - Identify and / or create industry sectors compatible with lifestyle
  - Improve broadband service for reliability and speed
  - Identify key area with infrastructure for industry
  - Tie visitor marketing to business attraction
  - Utilize wide area workforce
  - Design and deliver education and workforce training that fits with all sectors
- Identify areas for new residential development and redevelopment
  - Review City codes to accommodate “adaptable” housing
  - Identify infrastructure gaps
  - Identify areas for “workforce” housing
- Strategic Infrastructure
  - Expand Page airport to accommodate regional jets via FAA grants
  - Improvements to Page and Navajo utility and transportation networks
- Identify methods and infrastructure to attract industry
- Identify agriculture opportunities as an “export” business
  - Greenhouse / hydroponic irrigation
  - Explore international market for sheep
  - Cattle collaborative to increase grazing
- Identify individual community needs for infrastructure and prioritize
  - Address needs with broader government entities
- Improve housing opportunities
  - Identify areas available for housing within existing communities
  - Expand affordable workforce housing options for community members
  - Plan for retirement of aging housing stock
- Identify new business needs that can serve the community
  - Activate business startup via community members
  - Tie higher education to entrepreneurial development
  - Streamline process for business ownership within Navajo Nation governance
  - Look to Native American Business Incubator Network & SBDC for support
4. Southwestern Utah

The Southwestern Utah presentation focused on San Juan County, Utah. The unemployment rate in the county is high at 7.2% compared with the state rate of 3.4%. San Juan County is a large county just south of Grand County and just north of Arizona and shares its eastern border with Colorado. The Green River forms the western boundary of the county until it joins the Colorado River and flows into Lake Powell. San Juan County has as many national parks, monuments and historical/cultural sites as anywhere in the country, and southern Utah has been going through a tourism boom. Employment is dependent upon natural resource extraction and the tourism/travel industries. A number of the world class travel destinations in San Juan County are on the Navajo Utah Reservation Strip, including Monument Valley (park access) Goulding’s Lodge (movie and film museum), Rainbow Bridge National Monument, and Hovenweep National Monument.

Population levels and growth in the southeastern Utah District are directly dependent on local economics and are especially affected by the boom/bust cycles of the mining and extraction industry sectors in all four counties. There are two primary airports in San Juan County.

Utah State University-Eastern operates a campus in Blanding, Utah, where approximately 300 students, many of whom are Native American, attend classes. This campus offers the same certificate, associate, and bachelor degree programs as the main campus in Price. The USU-Eastern campus also offers distance education and courses at the high schools within the county and on the Utah Navajo Reservation Strip. The Blanding campus also hosts the Small Business Development Center for the County. Utah State University recently accomplished a comprehensive economic development analysis of San Juan County that so far has received minimal attention.

A portion of the Navajo Nation lies across the southern portion of San Juan County between the San Juan River and the Arizona border. The Nation currently remains poor in average per capita income, but rich in human and natural resources. A growing emphasis on education and a blossoming development in tourism, natural, and other resources promises more economic opportunity and stability for the Dine people. The current Navajo Tribal Administration is moving toward local empowerment, and special emphasis is being given to the Utah Navajo Chapters. Non-Native operated businesses are located on land leased from the Navajo Nation.

Although the school districts, government agencies and higher education have hi-speed broadband access, public wireless (cell) and fixed broadband service in San Juan is inadequate. The southern end of the county, especially south of Blanding, offers only fixed broadband speeds under 5mgs. South of Bluff, fixed broadband is available only via satellite. Cell service is equally spotty, with 3G service only available in Monticello and the heart of Blanding. The further south one travels from Mon-
ticello the slower and more unreliable cell service becomes. Although the advertised mobile broadband speed on portions of the Reservation is listed at 10-25mgs, actual speed is highly variable and dependent on weather.

The Northern Ute Reservation covers a small area in eastern San Juan County and about 18% of Grand County in the northwest corner of the county with no permanent population. White Mesa has a population of about 380 people and is part of the larger Ute Mountain Ute tribe headquartered in Towaoc, Colorado. White Mesa operates as a branch of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and is governed by a seven-member board. The Ute Mountain Utes’ Tribal lands, which total about 597,000 acres, are divided up in checkerboard allotments and dot sections of Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico.

Humble Oil and Shell Oil initiated agreements with the Navajo Tribe and the State of Utah to exploit the rich petroleum reserves locked beneath the Aneth Oil Field. The Texas Company drilled its first well in 1956 and welcomed a rapid flow of 1,704 barrels per day. Other companies responded immediately; suddenly the Nation found itself administering leases and rentals throughout the northern part of the Reservation, known generally as the Four Corners Oil Field. In 1956 alone, the Aneth Oil Field yielded $34.5 million in royalties to the Nation.

By 1978, however, there was rising discontent in the oil fields, and as a result of demonstrations, leases were re-negotiated. Along with a diminishing number of barrels of oil and royalties, there is also diminishing enthusiasm for the oil fields among many of the older Navajo people, who complain of environmental issues.

Horizontal drilling was initiated in 1994. Navajo Nation Oil and Gas (NNOGC) and Resolute Oil obtain all of ExxonMobil’s producing properties in the Greater Aneth Area in 2006. In 2012, NNOGC purchases 50% of Denbury’s interest and 10% of Resolute’s interest in the Greater Aneth Field for $137.5 million, adding approximately 1,000 BBLD to its portfolio.

5. Tribes

One area where synergies and a mutually beneficial economic development approach has been largely ignored is in establishing partnerships with Tribes. Because Tribes are the only entities in the country that can act both as businesses and governments, they have inherent funding, marketing and regulatory advantages. Up to now, with few exceptions, Tribal/community relations have been characterized by a level of mistrust and ignorance of how viable Tribal/community/business partnerships can succeed. Because of the lack of progress in this area, the potential to forge productive outcomes based upon new relationships is immense. The Forum had participation from Four Corners Tribal leaders.

There is a disproportionate impact on the energy Tribes of the Four Corners area, including the Jicarilla Apache Nation, the Navajo Nation, The Southern Ute, the Ute Mountain Ute and the Hopi Tribe. Most of these Tribes, with the exception of the Navajo, have relatively small populations living in isolated areas where there is minimal opportunity for alternative economic development. The Jicarilla Apache Nation, has lost close to 40% of its annual operating budget as a result of the price declines in the oil and gas sector. The Hopi Tribe is losing roughly 80% of its operating revenue that has been accruing to the Tribe since the 60’s from coal mining royalties. More than any other group being impacted by the Four Corners energy sector, the Hopi are the most vulnerable and have the most to lose. The Hopi are facing a serious economic crisis.
The Jicarilla Apache Nation just completed a large purchase of the Black Hills Corporation oil and gas assets on Jicarilla land. The Jicarilla Apache Energy Company (JAECO) will manage those assets. Oil and gas wells on Indian land are mostly leased out to development companies and are among the most expensive to operate because developers must pay federal, state and Tribal taxes in addition to royalties. When a Tribe takes over those assets, those expenses go away, which can total close to 30% of the gross revenue generated by wells. When wells on Indian land move from the hands of developers to Tribes they go from being among the most expensive to operate to the cheapest, as Tribes do not pay federal or state taxes.

Besides the Black Hills purchase, the Jicarilla Apache Nation has received tentative approval for an EDA grant that will help to finance a strategy for the Nation to evaluate existing wells on their land that are set to be abandoned by developers. The Nation can enter into negotiations to take over leases of marginal wells, bringing them back into profitable production and helping to shore up the regional oil and gas industry. This is one small example of how Tribes can take advantage of their unique position to contribute to the regional economy.

Tribes can avail themselves of a number of advantages. Advantages include being able to access incentive financing that include grants, private tax equity financing, low interest bonds and loans, government guaranteed loans and specialty financing such as New Market Tax Credits and EB5 Financing. Tribes can take advantage of potentially lucrative opportunities to market to the federal government through programs such as SBA 8(a) and Hubzone programs. Tribes can enter into joint-venture partnerships with private business.

Tribes are self-regulating organizations and can form their own utilities, as well as leverage rights—of-way agreements with external utilities. Tribes can also enter into special Public Law 93-638 contracts with the federal government with special advantages. They can also become free-trade zones. There is tremendous potential for communities and the private sector to enter into equitable and lucrative business arrangements with Tribal governments and entrepreneurs that can help to strengthen the entire region. In order for that to occur, however, a level of trust and communication must be built as well as an understanding of the unique ways in which Tribal governments operate that includes the government to government relationships that Tribes have with the US Federal Government. Possibly the most important thing for non-Tribal interests to realize is that each Tribe is different, with differing capabilities, differing levels of business sophistication, access to capital and other resources and political will.

The most significant regional Tribal economic player by far is of course the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation has a large presence in oil and gas, coal, agriculture, energy, infrastructure and natural resources among many other endeavors. The Nation provides may thousands of regional jobs and an enormous market to the region. NAPI (Navajo Agricultural Products Industry), for example, is the largest agricultural opera-
tion in New Mexico with 75,000 developed irrigated acres and over 600 employees. There is significant potential to involve the Nation, and to a lesser degree individual Navajo Chapters, in regional economic development initiatives.

The Southern Ute are a very sophisticated business Tribe with multi-billion-dollar investments throughout the United States, but apart from their own Reservation, minimal investment into the region. There is good potential for the Four Corners community start to look at the Tribe as a potential source of local investment capital, and begin to work with the Tribe to structure competitive regional investment opportunities that could be of interest to the Tribe.

D. Keynotes

There were three keynote addresses delivered during lunch. Kevin Crosby from Arizona Public Service Company spoke about the Four Corners Power plant and impending shutdowns; Jeff Finkle, President of the International Economic Development Council spoke about trends in economic development and how they could relate to the Four Corners situation; And T. Gregg Merrion, CEO of Merrion Oil and gas spoke about the local oil and gas industry.

The International Economic Development Council is a 5,000 plus member organization and is the world leader in economic development education and training, providing conferences, professional development and certification, legislative tracking, an information clearinghouse, career services, newsletters and journal and advisory services and research.

Finkle started off by talking about the fact that site selection criteria influences economic development trends and practice and that corporations are making decisions on where to invest and expand based on:

- Qualified workforce
- Accessibility/transportation
- Infrastructure (incl. broadband)
- Diversity of population
- Quality of life/cost living
- Energy availability

According to Finkle core trends in economic development today seem to fit well with the theme of the Forum and include:

- Economic Opportunity & Equity
- Regional Collaboration
- Attracting Investment
- Community Resilience and Innovation

Communities are collaborating regionally to remain resilient in the face of any disruption through enhanced marketing efforts, workforce development initiatives, investment attraction plans and quality-of-place strategies. The essential ingredient for competitiveness is diversification. Diversification strategies are essential for developing resilient plans to protect local industries and secure jobs.
Economic Development

Regions are continuously impacted by recessions, disasters, the loss of a major employer, industry shifts, and technological transformations. Diversification strategies sustain the local economic base in the face of any disruption. Strategies include a range of activities, such as business recruitment retention and expansion, workforce development, entrepreneurial development, promoting tourism and leveraging university capabilities. Diversification efforts take time to plan and implement, and should be based upon not waiting until a plant closes or a disaster hits. Stakeholder buy-in and collaboration are vital.

Effective diversification requires regional collaboration. Collaborating Regionally to drive a diversification effort requires a clear plan. Leadership must lead; roles must be defined; goals and strategies must be agreed upon; performance must be measured; and the most important factor is communication. Diversified regions have a more attractive quality-of-life.
Key Take-Aways include:

- There is no one path toward economic diversification
- Be proactive and plan-ahead for future disruptions
- Regional collaboration brings a new level of profit-making capability into play
- Strong leadership and community buy-in are essential

T. Greg Merrion, second-generation president of Merrion Oil and Gas Corp. in Farmington, is accustomed to boom-and-bust cycles in the energy industry. Merrion Oil & Gas is the 33rd largest producer of natural gas in New Mexico, and also has operations in Colorado and Wyoming. T. Greg has a Petroleum Engineering degree from Colorado School of Mines and a Masters’ degree in Business from New Mexico State University. He is a past president of the Independent Petroleum Association of New Mexico and a past chairman of the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association. Merrion Oil and Gas is managed conservatively and manages to adapt well to changes in the energy sector. There is likely no one more qualified to speak about the local energy industry.

An amount of what T. Greg covered in his talk was covered in this report in the section on the energy economy. New Mexico San Juan natural gas has fallen at an annualized trend-line rate of 4.7% from 2006 to 2014. After peaking at 14 in August 2011, the drilling rig count in the San Juan Basin stood at just 3 in early October 2015, and now stands at 7. The flood of Marcellus gas supplies to market over the past few years, which dropped the commodity’s price well below the crude oil value slump, led producers in the San Juan Basin away from the gassier part of the play and towards the oil-rich Mancos Shale portion located in the southern end of the basin.

The “actors” are changing. Mancos “sweet spots” are still being identified. WPX and Encana have led the way drilling horizontal Mancos wells, but others are getting in the game. Horizontal drilling and completion techniques are still being optimized. Mancos gas drilling will ensue, even at these prices, but particularly if gas prices increase. There is a lot of oil and gas in the San Juan Basin still left to develop.

Consonant with the advice of the Region 5 Team that “an economic crisis is a terrible thing to waste”, due to the price declines, the oil and gas companies that are still active have been able to effect significant reduction in development costs.

![Crude Oil Price](image1.png)

![Natural Gas Price](image2.png)
### San Juan Basin Mancos shale deposit

![San Juan Basin Cross Section](image)

The SJ Basin has produced 50 TCF & 381 MMBO to date.

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E. Closing

Tom Taylor, former Mayor of Farmington and President of 4 Corners Economic Development Corporation, presented a highly personal and hilarious view of economic development while he was Mayor. He was able to get economic development done by seeing advantages that were out there, finding the right people to work with, and just “doing it”. The rules and regulations would come later. According to Tom, “there’s are no rules in art”. Many artists just create messes, call it art, and people buy it. According to Tom, some of that freedom (less the messes) may be what’s missing in business development. This may be a bit risky from a policy standpoint, but Tom was able to make it work.

Jeff Kiely and Roger Fragua summed up the conference. Roger talked about the need to maintain positive and honest communication among all stakeholders within the energy economy, brought out strongly within the energy breakout, including industry and environmental groups.

After looking at all of the information that was brought out over the day and a half of this extraordinary conference, it may be that the most significant factor in realizing economic development could be strong leadership, lots of energy, and the will to accomplish projects that need to get done for the greater good. At least that was reflected in the personas of our special guests.

F. The Last Word

The last word - Indigenuity
The last words - words inspired by the Forum:
**G. What to Pay Attention to**

- *Hold monthly meetings in the four states to build trust and generate new economy participation.*
- *Strategically share data between sectors*
- *Connect to the ecosystem*
- *Campaign to inspire new farmers*
- *Exercise out-of-the-box cross interests understanding and cooperation to achieve shared benefit for all stakeholders*
- *Keep expectations alive and functioning Stay empathetic and proactive to achieve regional interconnected success for a viable economy and promising lifestyle*
- *Don’t overlook resident art and creative outlets as an income base*
- *Pay attention to public safety and health*

**PARKING LOT:**

- Regional data collection
- Regional branding
- Distributed leadership
- Establish technology to assist initiatives
- Create jobs and educate simultaneously
- Engage Tribes in solutions to ensure positive results for Tribes
- Expand workforce and connect with employers
- Utilization of public lands
- Land restoration
- Clean-up and restore health in negatively affected areas
- Utilize Economic Gardening Strategy

**What do we want to do again?**

- Hold Geographic Meetings (by State and Tribe)
- Invite Diversity, Tribes, youth, college kids (assignments), NPOs, service providers
- Move meetings around (Location-wise)
- Keep break-out structure and length (to focus/and structure to achieve more in less time)
- Include tribes
- Forum Report (online) – digitally
- Develop breakout reports (e.g. Tourism) – digitally
- Encourage out-of-the-box thinking and creativity
- Ending sessions with regional collaborative that are working or worked
- Showcase success
- More elected officials
- Include what has happened in terms of results and report at next event (tracking progress)
- Interim exercise to identify stakeholders and partners (who’s not here?)
- Cross-pollinate breakout topics and clustering them
- Develop early success opportunities (identify low-hanging fruit) – success will keep people engaged and attract more people
- Make this available and affordable to everyone ($150 participation rate) – intentional inclusion
- Tag team presentations – Theme-Area leaders give report
o Do homework with Planning Group and Consortium
  o What are willing to invest?
  • Another area to focus is public safety (crime, drugs, etc.)
  • Need to have technology and incorporate graphics, pictures, and visuals

Never do that again?

  • Don’t need to do the big overview again
    o Do outreach and spend one-hour and then get to the to-do list
    o People needed to leave the action session
  • Don’t effectuate the myths and artificial barriers
  • Keep us on time
  • Develop ground rules for the entire forum

90-Day Action Plan

  • Let the community know what happened here and develop a mission statement or tag line (mantra) (Press)
  • Meetings on sub-themes (theme-area meetings)

At the end of the Forum commitment was strong. After a day and a half of planning, over 50 people decided to skip lunch and stay to look at ways to move forward. According to the schedule that came from the post Forum session and some additional discussion several things will happen.

This report is part of the outcome. There is discussion about soliciting an amount of funding from the State legislature at the upcoming session to help support an implementation effort. A working, interactive, password protected SharePoint website is being built with access afforded to Forum participants to share information and coordinate tasks. At some point it may make sense to stand up a complementary commercial site as well. A follow-up general meeting will be scheduled as a working session.

A regional consortium will be formed that will emphasize inclusivity from additional sectors and organizations that may already be working along complementary lines. Broad-based and extensive communication will be emphasized through diverse channels. The consortium will be organized along the lines of the Resilient Region Project in Minnesota with a core planning team, an advisory board and local project champions. The Region 5 Team stands ready to assist. A funding strategy for the operation of the consortium and for specific projects will be developed as appropriate. Sub-regional themed meetings will be organized. Frequent and open communication will be the glue that binds the sub-regions and Tribes together and helps to maintain momentum moving forward.
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| • Do Report and synthesize into mantra  
• Feedback on Report (to move theme-based conversations)  
• Take report to State Delegations | • Press (Regionally)  
• Go to our Boards and groups and disseminate | Immediately |
| • Develop a social media strategy and webpage; Start branding | • Region 9 (Laura Lewis Marchino) City of Grants (Les Gaines)  
• SIC-Enterprise Center (Judy Castleberry) | After Thanksgiving |
| • Interim Meetings (Theme-based groups)  
• Same agenda and outcomes and format  
• Get Champions together to figure out this  
• Have leadership diversity in terms of Champions and members of working groups | Champions:  
• Energy (Barb, Gwen)  
• Capacity-Building (Judy Castleberry)  
• Ag (Evert Oldham)  
• Technology/Location Neutral (Warren)  
• Health  
• Manufacturing  
• Tourism (Ashley)  
• Creative Economies  
• Regional Data & Analysis (David Eppich) | Mid-December |
| • Commit to be part of the Team for Implementation; continue to Next Forum | • Use the local EDO's | End of November |
| • Regional Consortium  
• Need to build up state momentum (AZ, UT, CO, Tribes) | • Jeff and Warren  
• Geri  
• Laura  
• Chris Fetzer  
• Tribal Representative | Mid December |
| • Development information portal (SharePoint site  
• Invite people to register their interest | • Darien Cabral | 2-weeks |
| • Build on 4C Regional Associations (4C Film Commission, Geo-tourism, etc.) — rather than start over | | |
IV. APPENDIX

Breakouts

Breakout sessions were held with a variety of facilitators organized around identified opportunity areas, and information recorded according to the given format. The facilitate sessions served as brainstorming sessions. Some ideas appear to be relevant, some may need additional explanation, some fit into existing strategies and initiatives that may or may not have been articulated, and some a truly great ideas. The breakouts serve to ground opportunities, involve people and provide information and potential direction for opportunity sector champions. A number of ideas cross individual sectors. Ideas can be sorted out and prioritized as part of a process for moving forward.

1. Manufacturing

Although Farmington has not thought of itself as a manufacturing hub, it is to a degree. There are a number of oil and gas equipment manufacturing companies in Farmington. PESCO, a manufacturer of midstream oil and gas equipment, for example, recently added 150 people to its workforce. San Juan College has a world-class incubator facility with a Small Business Development Center office and a satellite office of the New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership. There may be opportunity to manufacture new environmentally sound oil and gas equipment as well as equipment for other new energy related processes, especially if rail is built in the area. Manufacturing should remain as an opportunity sector with an assigned champion and a committee that is integrated into the regional plan, as well as a matchmaking program. There is interest in trying to recruit outdoor equipment manufacturing, and tie it to regional outdoor activities. A new outdoor equipment cluster could help to diversity the economic base.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical Vision</th>
<th>Current Reality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide regional value opportunities through:</td>
<td>Lack of entrepreneurial facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A regional well-trained workforce</td>
<td>Never tried to be a manufacturing hub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A diversified manufacturing base that makes products that are needed and causes no harm.</td>
<td>Vehicle access – mobility issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Leveraging the region’s natural resources and advantages</td>
<td>Sub-optimized communication</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Better mfg. for start-ups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Relocation of mfg. start-ups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Regional recruitment strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Define region’s value proposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Improve the value of products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Build a regional brand</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Outdoor recreation</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Re-purpose workers for new industries</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Some roads not conducive to heavy transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Logistics / transportation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5c Fix</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Better use if Farmington Airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Compile list of all products made in region</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Committee/Task Force to pull together all mfg. activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Identify a regional champion</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Improve roadways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Expensive to move materials in and out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Capacity

Capacity encompasses a lot. If the large uranium remediation and the Gallup/Navajo Water District projects are funded, a good deal of money will come into the area. The best way to prepare is to help structure local companies to secure a trained local workforce and to be in a strong position to bid on the work. This may be facilitated through creating a Tribal joint-venture with federal SBA 8(a) status to be able to realize bidding advantages with the federal government. Ways need to be found to build trust and working alliances. College training for new high-tech energy jobs should be a priority. There may be opportunities in housing, telecomm, water systems and transportation infrastructure. This sector deserves a champion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical Vision</th>
<th>Infrastructure Opportunities</th>
<th>Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21st century connectivity</td>
<td>Rural water systems</td>
<td>Small victories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>Inter-state governors meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership &amp; civic involvement</td>
<td>Telecom</td>
<td>Collaborative regionalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious investment in local knowledge</td>
<td>Public transit</td>
<td>Leadership development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital assessment</td>
<td>Roads and Rail</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Value based leadership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;D / brain-trusts / incubator / mentorships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure – roads / broadband</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Training / financial resources</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Efficient transportation and shipping</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workforce not ready for up-skilling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of trust- industry / communities / Tribes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Focus on what divides us</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Divisive politics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Liaisons between jurisdictions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency mapping</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5¢ Fix</th>
<th>Current Reality</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pool resources – keep communicating</td>
<td>Curricular flexibility</td>
<td>Incubator space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AZUNMCO web page</td>
<td>Lack of internet in rural sectors</td>
<td>Push broadband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular team building meetings</td>
<td>Suppression of dissent</td>
<td>More forums- networking- implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid relationships with government entities</td>
<td>High grid connectivity (renewables?)</td>
<td>Own business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jurisdiction</td>
<td>Funding for WealthWorks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Over-regulation</td>
<td>Academies – high-tech labs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mine clean-up opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Four Corners fed region</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Matchmaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Business investment environment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bureaucracy assessment – solutions</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community involvement – share lessons learned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cooperative partnering across jurisdictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cross disciplinary industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Find community champions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Infrastructure

Infrastructure may encompass supporting new rail and the Gallup Energy Logistics Park. Broadband improvement and telecomm connectivity, especially in the rural areas, deserve work, but may not be easy to implement. Involving stakeholders and key companies will be key to infrastructure development, as will soliciting public funds. This is an area where the economic development groups can work together and employ the local/regional strategy. A food hub may be something to look at as a public project to support agriculture and needs a project champion.

### Challenges
- Lack of supportive atmosphere
- Lack of funding
- Partisan politics
- Targeting alternatives to energy economy
- Outdoor recreation expansion
- Entrepreneur and artist opportunities
- Durango affordable housing
- Quality of life - environment, health and education

### Strategies
- Branding and zoning
- Commitment of key players
  - Government at all levels
  - Governor to governor alliances
  - Involve federal land managers
  - Involve industry
- Versatile funding
- ED organizations and grants
- Engagement
  - Transcend cultural barrier
  - Exercise inclusivity
  - Brand-based stakeholder participation
- Open communication - transparency
- Regional coordination
  - Community to community liaisons
- Identify sector area leaders (champions)

### Practical Vision
Utilize best practices and methods to ensure programs andcapital are in place to support infrastructure and the creation of a diversified economy

- Banking and capital performing
- Identified funding opportunities
- Education for future economy
- Implement proven dynamics
- Reduce regulatory boundaries
- Zoning for industry and recreation
- Technological support access

### $5 Fix
- Each out to elected leaders
- Include youth
- Network, share
### 4. Health

#### Practical Vision
- SJRMC is my hospital
- Mercy Regional
- World class health using national programs
- Quality healthcare in rural communities
- Income drives healthcare demand

#### Current Reality
- Need of the region- creating services even though the population doesn’t support
- Transportation- can’t get to the pharmacy, grocery store, fundamental items
- IHS- facility built in 1963 in Gallup. Want the facility on the reservation and mayor wants it in city limits.
- Community can’t support physicians
- You’re really Recruiting the whole family
- Childcare shortage- even where there are facilities there’s a waiting list
- Healthcare is too costly for individuals
- Greater scope of practice for nurse practitioners- need physicians to let that happen
- Healthcare access issues-
- Costs continue to rise.
- Patient loyalty is challenging because they can doctor shop across state lines since many organizations have committed to taking insurance from other states
- Employees aren’t purchasing employer sponsored insurance
- Transportation is lacking
- There are good specialty docs but not the entire region has physical or financial access to them. Requires a referral

#### Challenges
- Grants: hard time recruiting and retaining physicians
- No rehab or physical therapy services in small market
- Loan repayment and sign on bonus aren’t attractive enough for rural areas- everyone is doing $60,000
- Medical practices
- GRT tax challenge
- Shortage of rural health care educators
- Broad band
- General cost
- Training/education expensive for healthcare careers
- Shortage of qualified rural health care workers
- Not enough inpatient beds
- Pricing transparency mandates for Colorado- consumers can now price shop.
- Policy makers need to be more in tune with health needs of community. Just because a healthcare agency doesn’t request their help doesn’t mean they don’t have to pay attention
- Community leaders need to align their agenda with community needs
- Nurse practitioners need a greater scope of practice
- Consumers/Community members don’t understand the intricacies of healthcare and demand a breadth of services where it’s not possible to deliver
- Individual insurance plans are too expensive
- Trust issues exist among different groups- tribe, city, county, state, econ develop, non-profit
- Rural hospital funding is different in each state- funding is not always secure
- Market is too small to support a full-time specialist- usually requires 50k people

#### Opportunities
- Regional telemedicine programs
- Inform the community about the importance of education, ample housing, broadband lifestyle, dining, shopping, cops, job for spouse in order to recruit good docs

#### Strategies
Is current health care infrastructure an impediment to economic development? Senior health care. Is it adequate? Can it be promoted as an attraction for retirees?
- Grow your own
- Creating a neuroscience group
- Physician sharing across regions
- Resource sharing
- Telemedicine

Health care is an every community opportunity because of growing need. There should be a concrete effort to work with existing facilities to promote expansion while training a local workforce.
## 5. Agriculture

Prior to energy development, the Four Corners was an agricultural area. The Four Corners is home to the largest agricultural operation in the state—NAPI. If the Navajo pipeline comes to fruition additional irrigation will come into play. A food hub project and communal processing facilities for value-added production is a sound strategy to promote small farming. There may be a large publicly funded unused commercial kitchen in the area. There should be strong demand for locally produced food especially in Southern Colorado. If that market is developed money will start flowing south instead of mainly north. The region can connect with programs that support young farmers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical Vision</th>
<th>Current Reality</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish a viable ag industry in the 4 corners creating a sustaining and sustainable culture around it.</td>
<td>Demand for local food rising</td>
<td>Land is segmented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New market in emerging and natural/organic produce</td>
<td>Water shortage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Available land—reservation vs. non-reservation</td>
<td>Climate change</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Strategies

- Adopt a farmer apprenticeship pass down program
- Creating a neuroscience group
- School market for ag products
- Hospitals, restaurants and retail
- Local brands and value-added product assistance
- Explore diversification and agritourism
- Increase accessibility to education and start-up resources
- Enact permaculture practices to restore land

### Current Reality

- Demand for local food rising
- New market in emerging and natural/organic produce
- Available land—reservation vs. non-reservation

### Challenges

- Land is segmented
- Water shortage
- Climate change
- Aging farmers taking traditions with them
- Lack of support—young farmers
- Loss of entry land
- Lack or deteriorating infrastructure—irrigation
- Lack of scalability—storage and distribution

### Infrastructure Opportunities

- Communal processing equipment and facilities
- Repair ditches and irrigation
- Navajo pipeline has potential to create unprecedented projects

### Next Steps

- Commodity farm subsidization
- Educate around ag permitting—leases—jurisdictions on Tribal and non-Tribal lands
- Form inter-regional task force
- Host productivity forums at young farmers organizations
- Engage Tribal and trust landholders

### Fix

- Move to specialty crops
- Hydroponics
- Connect fallow farms as a combined resource
- Water management plan
6. Creative Economy

It is interesting that by far the largest economic creative sector in the region was only minimally mentioned in the breakout. Gallup is the wholesale center in the country for Indian art. Indian art is a $2 billion business centered in the Southwest. Almost none of it is controlled by Native people, and the artists often earn the least of those who are in the business. A major issue has been the importation of fake Indian art, which is a felony and remains largely unenforced. There is unrealized opportunity to promote Native art online. Art and tourism are connected. Art entrepreneurship should be taught and promoted, as well as studio tours and loops. Durango has a nascent gallery sector that can grow.

Practical Vision

Collaboration between municipal and regional authorities that supports the development and retention of entrepreneurialism. This partnership can promote cultural and revenue diversity in order to withstand and even thrive from a changing economic climate.

Infrastructure Opportunities

- Improved broadband
- Strengthened community economic development
- Awareness and involvement through public institutions, schools, churches, NGO's and volunteerism

5c Fix

- Talk about the issues
- Network with potential stakeholders

Current Reality

- Quality of life recruits business
- Lack of proactive coordination between federal, state and local government in addressing economic development
- Lack of respect, support and relationship with Tribes comprising a significant portion of the population.
- Assumption that displaced workers are ready for new skills training or that those skills will be available
- Recreational locations, agricultural and an artistic populace are present for development as an alternative to an energy based economy

Strategies

- Welcoming supportive environmental friendly creative industries and individuals
- Branding of vicinities according to sectors – nature appreciation, recreation, agriculture, commerce and the arts
- Create a 4 corners arts and culture loop
- Incorporate a workfree development component to accommodate retirees
- Host the Tribal World Championship Cross-Fitness games
- Aim for renewable energy
- Collaborate on agriculture
- Free high-speed internet to all citizens

Next Steps

- Identify stakeholders
- Plan development
- Strategic fundraising
- Make timeline for implementation of goals
7. Technology / Location Neutral

The rise of technology allows for telecommuting and a number of jobs that can be performed anywhere. Tech-entrepreneurs often choose to live in scenic areas in natural surroundings. However, telecommuters may need to be close to certain businesses or town amenities in addition to having access to high-speed broadband. Telecommuting is obviously facilitated by fiber and super-fast speeds. There is a struggle in many rural areas between private and publicly financed high-speed broadband. High-speed access is something to work on. Facilities for telecommuters with meeting rooms, LCD screens, copiers and even a secretary, where they can both relax and work, can encourage location neutral business.

Practical Vision
- Equal access to technology and the opportunity for quality of life that it offers

Current Reality
- Workforce needed for tech firms
- Deficient lifestyle amenities to attract workforce
- Diverse needs - a long process
- Prohibitive terrain affecting technology / accessibility
- Lack of easy viable transportation serving remote areas
- Need for stable disaster-free environment
- Populace are present for development as an alternative to an energy based economy

Challenges
- Multiple broadband costs and jurisdictions
- Connectivity
- Workforce to support innovation
- Lack of facilities for entertainment detracting from lifestyle lure / anchor for workforce
- Lack of fiscal incentives
- Tech creates internet crime

Strategies
- Install an innovation corridor with support systems to create a mentor tech business
- Partner with colleges, business, and non-profits for workforce innovation
- Do a needs assessment / inventory of broadband and cellular use
- Evaluate regulations affecting expanded technology
- Do digital “meet-ups” with tech innovators and players to maintain strategy coordination
- Inform students on career paths in tech mentorship

Next Steps
- Create understanding through a common language used around tech endeavoring
- Create a focus group to work on identifying priorities

Infrastructure Opportunities
- Expanding broadband
- Electricity to run broadband
- Finding the right people to get the job done

5P Fix
- Best practice research
- Identify funding mechanisms
- Stakeholder education and buy-in for rural medical internet, outlying businesses
8. Energy

New and existing companies can be encouraged to form around new technologies. New Mexico’s national laboratories may be able to play a role in working with Four Corners companies, and this should be explored. There is potential to promote and work closely with Tribal energy development, as Tribes have unique advantages in this area. There may be opportunity to promote new environmentally benign extractive industries such as helium, potash and hydrogen. Rail can facilitate the export of coal. The region should strive to stay at the cutting-edge of new energy development and technologies, including technology that benefits both industry and the environment. College workforce training should be geared towards new opportunities, including remediation activities. There was a consensus regarding the need to maintain frequent, productive and honest communication among all stakeholders, including energy and environmental groups.

Practical Vision

- We envision a regional and diversified energy transition towards a sustainable, resilient and smarter economic and environmental future.

Challenges

- Increase replacement of tax/employment base
- Optimization
- Limited choices
- Matching skills with new jobs
- Communication, Communication, Communication
- Cooperation

5¢ Fix

- Engage leadership
- Remove policy barriers

Best Ideas

- Invest in workforce development
- Energy leasing reforms
- Reservation inclusion
- Micro-grid development using renewable energy
- Conservation and diversification

Current Reality

- Transition
- Need for jobs, taxes and less abandonment consequences
  - Flat economies and continued economic decline
  - Establishing power capacity
  - Need diversification of energy output
  - New Mexico Energy Plan rollout

Infrastructure Opportunities

- Federal package – broadband
- Natural gas pipeline
- Improved rail distribution

Strategies

- Research and development innovation with Sandia and Los Alamos Labs
- Retain and retool energy assets
- Map resources county by county in 4 corners states
- Raise awareness on issues around economic impacts with data
- Define/ explain economic impacts at large
- Be inclusive
- Provide a safe environment on the ground and between different proponents
  - Identify best assets going forward

Next Steps

Create task force of “one voice” to:
- Solicit academia/labs contribution to a comprehensive regional energy plan
- Compare and provide data for future energy plan
- Seek funding for outreach and innovation technological source headwater considerations and Sandia Labs participation in planning
- Rely on citizens, Chairmen of Tribes and Tribal Councils

Best Hope

- Attracting high-wage jobs
- Peaceful transition and energy co-existence with other economic sectors in 4 corners region
- Hydrogen and helium development
- Smarter data, education, regulations and compliance and enforcement in a clean-up economy
- Conservation and diversification

New and existing companies can be encouraged to form around new technologies. New Mexico’s national laboratories may be able to play a role in working with Four Corners companies, and this should be explored. There is potential to promote and work closely with Tribal energy development, as Tribes have unique advantages in this area. There may be opportunity to promote new environmentally benign extractive industries such as helium, potash and hydrogen. Rail can facilitate the export of coal. The region should strive to stay at the cutting-edge of new energy development and technologies, including technology that benefits both industry and the environment. College workforce training should be geared towards new opportunities, including remediation activities. There was a consensus regarding the need to maintain frequent, productive and honest communication among all stakeholders, including energy and environmental groups.
9. Tourism

Tourism is a growing industry. The Four Corners area is blessed with many scenic areas, national parks, ancient ruins, cultural sites and outdoor sport amenities. There are very few parts of the country that can offer so much. There are a number of tourist-based programs and organizations working together, but few across state lines. This is an opportunity to collectively market the entire region and share resources.

**Practical Vision**

The Four Corners is your practical bucket list destination for your outdoor recreation cultural wonders and national park experiences

**Current Reality**

existing partnerships need to be expanded and supported to promote natural recreational amenities and attract tourism back to business

**Challenges**

- cross jurisdictional collaboration
- mutual support and pollination,
- improve trust and networking, especially respecting tribal first American sacred historic and cultural sites (i.e. guided tour
- develop partnerships improve regional communication, marketing and support;
- reduce prohibitive regulation
- attract tourism based business;
- public/private partnerships –
- generate mutual support with consideration toward private entrepreneurs needs;
- adequate marketing – marketing each other in a mutually supportive way and regional maps for guidance

**Strategies**

- Plan regional for future,
- coordinate events and recreational business workshop, group marketing
- recruit via tourism quality of life and business Infrastructure (Opportunities)
- Improve physical infrastructure such as road signage, on-line maps, public facilities;
- address ordinance issues regarding zoning and access to foster new business development (Building codes, fire codes)

**5c Fix**

- establish a regional planning group to communicate tourism issues and work together to dismantle territorial/cross jurisdictional and plan joint activities

**Next Steps**

- identify key stakeholders from public, private and tribal agencies, organizations and businesses to distribute information and stay connected
Forum Agenda
4 CORNERS FUTURE FORUM
“Thinking Regionally/Acting Locally
Thinking Locally/Acting Regionally”
San Juan College — Henderson Fine Arts Center
Farmington, New Mexico

PROGRAM

Day 1: November 1, 2017

8:00 – 9:30 am REGISTRATION, NETWORKING & BREAKFAST

9:00 – 9:05 am OPEN THE FORUM......................................................................................... Roger Fragua
Cota Holdings LLC

9:05 – 9:15 am WELCOME .......................................................................................................Dr. Toni Pendergrass
President, San Juan College

9:15 – 9:30 am “POWER FORWARD I”: Setting the Table ......................................................... Jeff Kiely
Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments
Warren Unsicker
Four Corners Economic Development
Arvin Trujillo
Arizona Public Service Company—Four Corners Power Plant

9:30 – 10:30 am KEYNOTE: “Transforming a Region” ................................................................. Cheryal Lee Hills
Arlene Jones
Region 5 Development Commission, Minnesota

10:30 – 10:45 am BREAK

10:45 am – 12:00 pm REGIONAL SNAPSHOTS
• Northwest New Mexico
• Southwest Colorado
• Southeast Utah
• Northeast Arizona
• Regional Tribes and Pueblos

12:00 pm – 12:20 pm “POWER FORWARD II”: A Look at the Future .......................................... Brian Andrea [invited]
CEO, TechSource

12:20 pm – 1:30 pm LUNCH

KEYNOTES: ......................................................................................................................... Jeff Finkle
International Economic Development Council
David Hansen [invited]
Vice-President, Arizona Public Service Company—Fossil Generation
T. Greg Merrion
Merrion Oil & Gas
1:30 pm – 1:45 pm  
**RECAP & PREP FOR AFTERNOON SESSIONS**  
Roger Fragua

1:45 pm – 3:00 pm  
**THEME-AREA BREAKOUTS – Round 1**  
Facilitators: Roger Fragua, Joanne Bryant, Rod Ibeita, Jeff Kiely, Warren Unsicker  
Coordinator: Darien Cabral (Cota Holdings)  
5 Breakouts will be facilitated, representing the following Themes:  
Energy; Agriculture; Creative Economy; Health; Capacity Factors  
(Education/Workforce; Infrastructure)

3:00 pm – 3:15 pm  
**BREAK**

3:15 – 4:30 pm  
**THEME-AREA BREAKOUTS – Round 2**  
Facilitators: Roger Fragua, Joanne Bryant, Rod Ibeita, Jeff Kiely, Warren Unsicker  
Coordinator: Darien Cabral  
5 Breakouts will be facilitated, representing the following Themes:  
Energy; Manufacturing; Tourism/Outdoor Recreation; Technology & Location-Neutral;  
Capacity Factors (Education/Workforce; Infrastructure)

4:30 – 4:45 pm  
**SUMMARY OF THE DAY**  
Roger Fragua

6:00 – 8:30 pm  
**RECEPTION:** at the Farmington Marriott

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**Day 2: November 2, 2017**

7:30 – 8:30 am  
**BREAKFAST**

8:00 – 8:10 am  
**RECAP & PREP FOR THE DAY**  
Roger Fragua

8:15 – 8:45 am  
**REFLECTIONS & OBSERVATIONS**  
Cheryal Lee Hills & Arlene Jones

8:50 – 10:30 am  
**REPORTS FROM THE DAY 1 BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

10:30 am – 10:45 am  
**BREAK**

10:45 am – 11:25 am  
**“POWER FORWARD III”: Regional Outlook—Retrospect & Prospect**  
Moderator: Roger Fragua  
Panel: Tom Taylor, Four Corners Economic Development, Inc.  
David Eppich, San Juan College  
Jeff Kiely, Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments

11:30 am – 12:15 pm  
**FACILITATED DISCUSSION: Next Steps**

12:15 – 12:30 pm  
**CONFERENCE CLOSING AND NEXT STEPS**

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*LUNCH WILL BE ON YOUR OWN.*

Immediately following the close of the Forum, the Planning Team will be meeting to discuss next steps  
and begin planning for implementation of strategies prioritized during the Forum.  
Others interested in joining this effort are welcome to be a part of this meeting following the Forum.  
The location will be announced at the Forum.