



# Union County

New Mexico

Adopted 5.12.2020



2020

# Comprehensive Plan



CONSENSUS

PLANNING

Prepared by:  
Consensus Planning, Inc.  
302 Eighth Street NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87102





**Justin Bennett**  
Chair  
**W. Carr Vincent**  
Member  
**Clayton Kiesling**  
Member

PO Box 430  
Clayton, NM 88415  
(575)374-8896  
(575)374-2763 Fax  
[www.unionnm.us](http://www.unionnm.us)

**Brandy Thompson**  
County Manager

**Stephen C. Ross**  
County Attorney

**RESOLUTION #2020-43**

**ACCEPTANCE AND ADOPTION OF THE 2020 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AS THE OFFICAL PLANNING GUIDE FOR UNION COUNTY, NEW MEXICO**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners has determined that it is in the its best interest to engage in long range planning activities for Union County; *and*

**WHEREAS**, the 2020 Union County Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide and manage decision-making related to the future growth, physical development, and capital expenditures of the County over a 20-year planning horizon; *and*

**WHEREAS**, the 2020 Union County Comprehensive Plan address a wide range of planning elements through goals and implementation strategies regarding land use, housing, economic development, infrastructure, water resources, transportation, public services, and facilities, hazard mitigation, and implementation; *and*

**WHEREAS**, the 2020 Union County Comprehensive Plan is intended to foster collaboration between the Board of County Commissioners and elected officials in the four municipalities of Clayton, Grenville, Des Moines, and Folsom; *and*

**WHEREAS**, after public input the Board of County Commissioners has determined that the 2020 Union County Comprehensive Plan is ready for final adoption.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Union County Board of Commissioners does hereby accept and adopt the 2020 Comprehensive Plan as the official planning guide for Union County.

**ACCEPTED AND APPROVED** this 12<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2020 in regular session by the Union County Board of Commissioners, at Clayton, Union County, New Mexico.



*Mary Lou Markins*  
Mary Lou Markins, County Clerk

*Justin Bennett*  
Justin Bennett, Commission Chair

*W. Carr Vincent*  
W. Carr Vincent, Commissioner

*Clayton Kiesling*  
Clayton Kiesling, Commissioner



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## UNION COUNTY COMMISSION

Justin Bennett, Chairman  
W. Carr Vincent  
Clay Kiesling

## UNION COUNTY STAFF

Brandy Thompson, County Manager  
Mary Lou Harkins, County Clerk  
James Lobb, County Sheriff  
Brenda Green, Chief Deputy Clerk  
Russell Kear, County Road Superintendent  
Jim O'Bryant, County Fire Coordinator  
Lorenzo T. Montoya, County Assessor's Office  
Levon Sink, GIS Affiliate Chair, Rural Addressing Coordinator

## OTHER AGENCIES

Christy Tafoya, Director, NM State Parks, EMNRD  
James Gallegos, P.E., NMDOT, District 4  
Tim Hagaman, NMEDD, Region 4  
Mark Funk, Manager, Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways  
Sandy Chancey, Executive Director, Eastern New Mexico Council of Governments  
April Gallegos, Executive Director, Clayton-Union County Chamber of Commerce  
Kodi Sumpter, Superintendent, Des Moines Municipal Schools  
Stacey Diller, Superintendent, Clayton Public Schools  
Tammie Stump, CEO, Union County General Hospital  
Justin Drumm, Union County Fair Complex Committee  
Ann Reeser, Director, A.W. Thompson Public Library

## CONSULTANT

Consensus Planning, Inc.  
Jacqueline Fishman, AICP  
Charlene Johnson  
Michael Vos, AICP  
Omega Delgado  
Scott Culler, RLA, ASLA

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Chapter 1:  
**Executive Summary**



## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

The 2020 Union County Comprehensive Plan is the key policy document intended to guide and manage decision making related to the future growth and development of the County. The Comprehensive Plan is designed to address the entire geographic area of Union County and the functional elements that impact physical, cultural, and community development. The Comprehensive Plan provides general policy guidance, not detailed regulations, on a wide range of community issues. It presents a 20-year vision to guide future growth, development, and capital expenditures based on community priorities. The Comprehensive Plan is also intended to foster coordination between the Board of County Commissioners and elected officials in the municipalities of Clayton, Des Moines, Folsom, and Grenville.

### Process

The Comprehensive Plan is the result of a 10-month planning process that was initiated in May 2019. The Comprehensive Plan had not been updated in many years and the Union County Commissioners determined that it was in the best interest of the community to create a policy framework for growth and development. Union County solicited the professional services of a planning consultant to facilitate the development of the Union County Comprehensive Plan, which was completed simultaneously with the Town of Clayton Comprehensive Plan by the same consultant. This provided an important level of consistency between the two Comprehensive Plans. While the Union County Comprehensive Plan focuses on the elements appropriate at the County level, there are specific implementation strategies that will require close coordination and cooperation between Union County and the Town of Clayton.

The Comprehensive Plan was completed in February 2020. The planning process involved a series of public meetings and stakeholder interviews; a community-wide survey; and coordination with other Union County consultants on relevant planning efforts that have been incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan.

### Context

Union County is located in northeastern New Mexico and is bordered by Colfax County to the west, Harding County to the southwest, Quay County to the south, the state of Texas to the east, and the state of Colorado to the north. Union County is a rural county that primarily relies on farming and ranching to help sustain the rural lifestyle that residents value and want to maintain in the future. There are ample opportunities to expand the Union County economy through renewable energy and tourism.

### Planning Authority

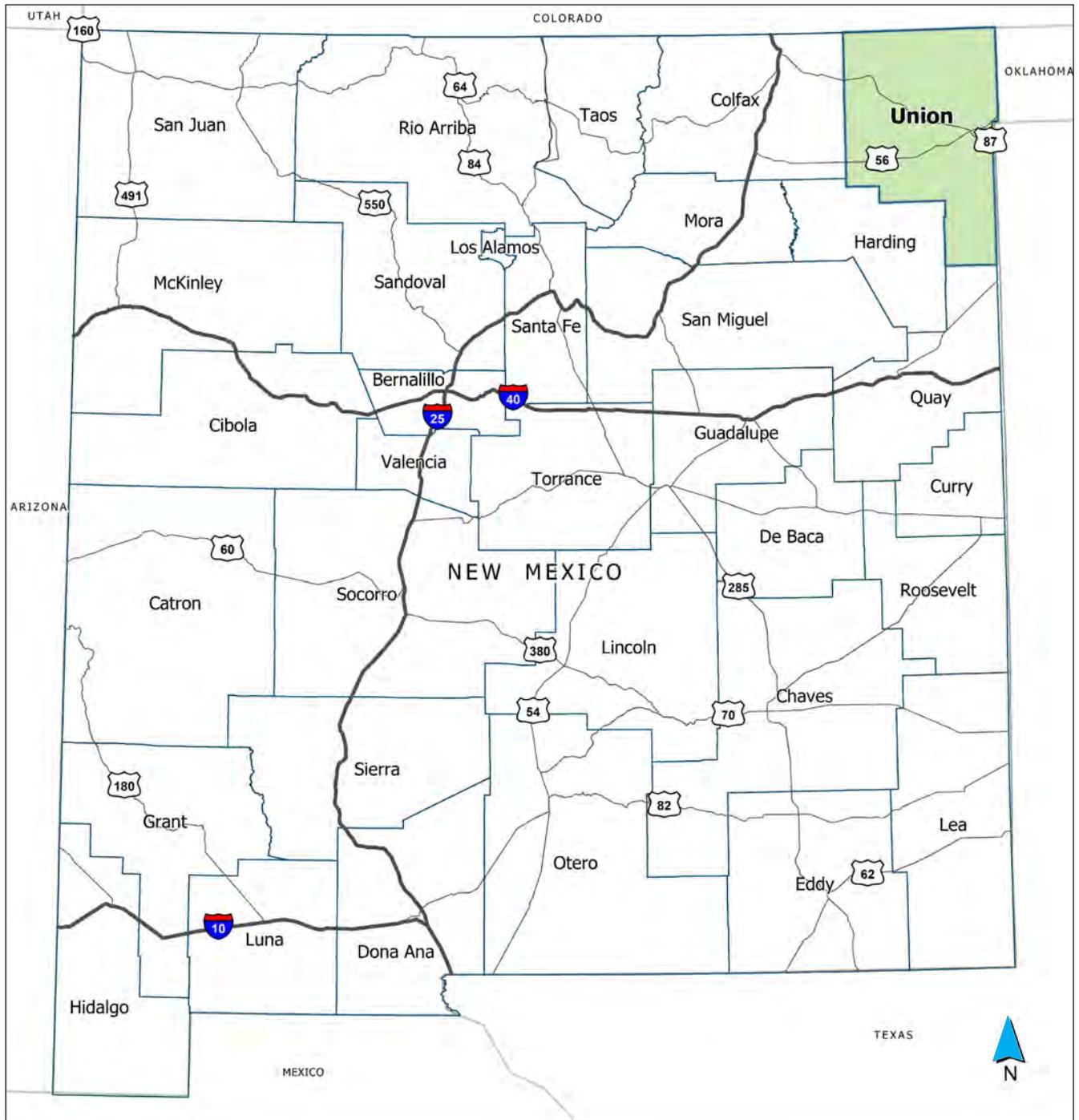
The Union County Comprehensive Plan was created in compliance with and pursuant to Section 3-19-9 NMSA 1978, as follows:

“...The plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and establishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the municipality which will, in accordance with existing and future needs, best promote health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity or the general welfare as well as efficiency and economic in the process of development.”

### What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A Comprehensive Plan is a general policy document that provides a written and graphic description of the existing conditions, community desires, and a “road map” to ensure the community vision is achieved through sound decision-making regarding future growth, development, and infrastructure investments. The community’s values are translated into specific goals, objectives, and implementation strategies that provide the framework for the Comprehensive Plan and are typically accompanied by a general time frame and entity responsible for implementation.

A Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide guidance to decision makers as development proposals are evaluated to ensure conformance with the community vision and desires. Simply put, a Comprehensive Plan is one of the most important documents that a county or city can adopt. A Comprehensive Plan is not a regulatory document. Nor is it intended to be a static document; it should



Union County location.

be evaluated and modified over time as conditions and community aspirations evolve and change. Subsequent community initiatives and plans should be consistent with the general direction established by the Comprehensive Plan.

### Guiding Principles

Guiding principles to ensure the successful implementation and relevancy of the Comprehensive Plan include:

- Reviewing the Comprehensive Plan on a regular basis and updating it every five years. The Board of County Commissioners should establish an annual review to ensure the Comprehensive Plan stays relevant and useful.
- Engaging a wide cross section of the public on all updates to the Comprehensive Plan.
- Linking the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) to the priorities and implementation strategies identified in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Monitoring and identifying funding resources and programs that could be utilized for implementation of capital improvements.
- Basing future grant applications and funding requests on the implementation strategies contained in the Comprehensive Plan.

Many of the implementation strategies presented in the Comprehensive Plan require capital outlay and will need to be prioritized. The larger projects may need to be completed in phases. Establishing partnerships with other local, regional, and in some cases, state-wide entities to address community needs will assist Union County in implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

## 1.2 KEY PLANNING THEMES

There are several common planning themes that run throughout the Comprehensive Plan. These planning themes are based on issues that were identified through the planning process and have been addressed through goals, objectives, and implementation strategies. A summary of the key planning themes follows below.

- Strive to diversify and grow the economy of Union County. Union County should pursue new and complementary industries that build on the County's existing strengths and assets, including the Ports-to-Plains Corridor; renewable energy and energy transmission; value-added agriculture; and outdoor recreation.
- Preserve the custom and culture of Union County as a ranching and agricultural community. Union County should continue to be proactive and work with NMSU in promoting best practices for rangeland management and agriculture. Union County is doing an exemplary job in monitoring groundwater levels.
- Become more boastful of the incredible assets and natural resources present in Union County. Most New Mexico residents are unaware of all Union County has to offer at Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways, Capulin Volcano National Monument, Kiowa National Grasslands, Folsom Man Archaeological Site, and its incredible night skies. Union County needs to develop and promote its brand.
- Emphasize the importance of workforce training and education of Union County youth. Union County should take a leadership role in coordinating with the municipalities of Clayton, Des Moines, Folsom, and Grenville; the public school districts of Clayton, Des Moines, and Springer; and the regional community colleges to ensure Union County youth have a bright future and become productive citizens.
- Expand the available housing inventory in Union County. Union County's existing housing stock does not adequately meet the housing needs for its workforce, seniors, or youth that

want to plant their roots in the community. Union County should pursue the development of an affordable housing plan through the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) and work on identifying County-owned assets that could be utilized under an affordable housing program.

- Water is the lifeblood of any New Mexico community, particularly one that is highly dependent on this precious resource for supporting its agricultural economy. Union County has done an exemplary job in monitoring the groundwater levels through the ongoing Hydrogeology Project, which should be continued and referenced in future water planning.
- The roadway system is a basic service that Union County provides to its residents. Union County should continue to prioritize and systematically make improvements to the roadway system, and continue to work with and apply for grants to the NMDOT.

### 1.3 PLAN ELEMENTS

The Comprehensive Plan is organized into ten chapters. The first two chapters are the Executive Summary, which provides a broad overview of the planning process, a summary of the key planning themes, and a summary of the primary Comprehensive Plan elements, and the Community Profile, which provides a summary of Union County's history, population characteristics and projections, and educational attainment for Union County residents. A brief summary of each major Plan element follows below:

#### Chapter 3: Land Use

The Land Use element describes the general pattern of land use within Union County and provides a framework to guide future growth and land use decisions over the next 20 years. It includes descriptions of existing land use; public lands; existing land use regulations; land use issues; and provides a Future Land Use Scenario that shows preferred land uses, growth areas for residential, commercial, industrial, hospitality and RV park, community gateways, and recreational

corridors. Goals, objectives, and strategies address:

- Promoting new growth and development in key locations as shown on the Future Land Use Scenario, creating an inventory of available property, and creating development standards for industrial and heavy commercial use;
- Protecting and preserving ranching and agriculture through adoption of a Right to Farm ordinance; encouraging best practices in rangeland management; and establishing an agricultural committee to review new land use regulations; and
- Improving the visual appearance of Union County through sponsoring community clean-up events; developing a Nuisance Ordinance addressing junk, abandoned vehicles, dilapidated structures, and overgrown vegetation; creating a brand and incorporating into community gateways; incorporating criteria that considers impacts to scenic quality for renewable energy projects; considering the adoption of a billboard ordinance for major highways; and providing adequate staffing levels for enforcement.

#### Chapter 4: Economic Development

The Economic Development element describes how Union County can build upon existing strengths and maintain a strong and vibrant economy. It includes an economic profile for Union County; a profile of the agricultural economy; a summary of outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities; descriptions of economic assets, resources, and opportunities that Union County can utilize and build upon. Goal, objectives, and strategies address:

- Pursuing economic development initiatives to expand existing businesses, attract new well-paying jobs and business opportunities, and facilitating small business development through an update to the County's LEDA ordinance; recruiting businesses related and complementary to existing and targeted business clusters; seeking workforce investment funding; completing a study to support the development of a small business

incubator; and working with local banks to offer access to capital to small businesses through a revolving loan fund;

- Promoting and increasing tourism through the recruitment of additional lodging and hospitality facilities in the vicinity of Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways and Capulin Volcano National Monument; creating a targeted tourism marketing campaign that promotes Union County as the Northeast New Mexico destination for outdoor recreation and cultural and historic attractions; co-sponsoring community events with Clayton, Des Moines, and Folsom; recruiting tourism support services, such as gas stations, restaurants, rest stops, motels/hotels, and recreation equipment; and supporting Folsom Village on its application to New Mexico MainStreet;
- Expanding workforce training through determining the feasibility of a satellite community college in Union County; and providing information to Union County residents on the available online education classes offered by Mesalands, Luna, and Clovis Community Colleges; and
- Jointly promoting Clayton Business Park as the local and regional primary commercial and industrial center through applying for funding to improve the Business Park; promoting the Business Park to renewable energy, food manufacturing, warehousing and distribution companies; and creating an incentive package for business interested in locating to the Business Park.

### Chapter 5: Housing

The Housing element describes how the delivery of safe and affordable housing provides the security and stability needed for any healthy community. It includes a housing profile for Union County; descriptions of the existing housing market; a summary of housing for special populations, including seniors, veterans, and disabled people; a summary of existing housing resources and programs; and an overview of housing issues and needs. Goals, objectives, and strategies address:

- Increasing the housing supply in Union County, including both market rate and

affordable housing through applying for a grant to the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority to fund an Affordable Housing Plan, potentially with the Town of Clayton; identifying incentives for builders and developers to build affordable housing projects; developing an educational program that provides information on affordable housing programs, credit counseling, first time homebuyer programs, rehabilitation and maintenance programs for very low income homeowners, seniors, and veterans, down payment and closing cost assistance, and referrals to MFA-approved lenders; and identifying an appropriate entity to oversee implementation of the Union County Affordable Housing Plan;

- Supporting the rehabilitation of existing dilapidated, vacant, and/or abandoned housing through identifying and acquiring through condemnation properties suitable for redevelopment that can be conveyed later to a builder at a reduced cost; seeking partnerships with private or non-profit developers to rehabilitate vacant and abandoned housing; and developing a nuisance ordinance that addresses dangerous buildings, abandoned vehicles, overgrown vegetation, and storage of junk on residential properties.

### Chapter 6: Water Resources and Drainage

The Water Resources and Drainage element describes how the protection of water resources is key for the long-term sustainability of Union County ranching and agriculture activities. It includes a water section that summarizes the findings in the Northeast New Mexico Regional Water Plan regarding future demand, municipal water systems, irrigated agriculture; existing water supply and the ongoing Union County Hydrogeology Project; drainage issues and Union County's existing watershed basins; dam safety rankings; liquid waste and water quality issues; and the FY2021-2025 ICIP. Goals, objectives, and strategies address:

- Promoting the sustainable and efficient management of water resources through the creation of a 40-Year Water Plan for Union County and continuing the monitoring of groundwater levels;

- Maintaining an adequate and sustainable water supply through the development of a water conservation program; amending the Union County Subdivision Ordinance to require new developments to provide proof of water rights, available water supply, and a study that shows the impact to the groundwater supply;
- Protecting Union County's groundwater supply from potential degradation through the development of a Liquid Waste Ordinance that address discharge of untreated waste; development of a Hazardous Materials Ordinance that prohibits the maintenance or storage of hazardous materials and identifies drop off locations for proper disposal; and creating an educational program on groundwater protection that covers liquid waste and hazardous materials; and
- Increasing Union County's capacity to handle major storm events through the creation of a stormwater design standard for new development; providing maintenance and improvements to existing drainage channels and other storm drainage conveyances; and creating a dam maintenance and improvement plan that prioritizes improvements to existing dams deemed to be in poor condition.

### Chapter 7: Transportation

The Transportation element presents transportation infrastructure as one of the most important services provided by Union County. The chapter is intended to guide decision-making and setting priorities for roadway improvements. It includes a summary of the existing roadway system consisting of US and State Highways, County roads, and local streets; a summary of the functional classification of existing roadways; roadway maintenance activities in Union County and community input on the roads most in need of improvement; long range transportation planning, including the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, access to state land, and future transportation projects; transportation modes, including personal vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians, transit and air travel; rail and freight; and the FY2021-2025 ICIP, which is mostly comprised of transportation related

capital projects. Goals, objectives, and strategies address:

- Maintaining safe roadway conditions through the development of an Asset Management Plan; creating a Freight Plan to determine needed improvements to roads, rail crossings, and bridges; evaluating the functional classifications of existing roadways to determine if changes are needed; and working with NMDOT on improving and expanding services at the Sierra Grande Rest Area;
- Providing appropriate roadway and multi-modal access to accommodate existing and future development through planning for future roadways based on existing demand and future growth; determining the feasibility of adding bike lanes within US 87/64 and NM 370 rights-of-way or constructing adjacent multi-use trails as part of the Recreation Loops; and pursuing available funding from the Local Government Road Fund, Municipal Arterial Program, Cooperative Projects, Safety Projects, Bicycle/Pedestrian/Equestrian BPE Program, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and Recreational Trails Program (RTP);
- Encouraging the expansion of transit services within close proximity to Clayton, Des Moines, and Folsom through seeking additional state or federal funding for enhancements and expansion of transit services; and expanding transit to serve tourists seeking to visit Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways, Capulin Volcano National Monument, and other regional attractions;
- Supporting the expansion to and improvement of Clayton Municipal Air Park by working with the Clayton-Union County Chamber to identify existing and future businesses that may benefit from and desire air services.

### Chapter 8: Public Facilities and Services

The Public Facilities and Services element covers a wide range of quality of life issues, including public safety services provided by the Union County Sheriff's Department and the Fire Departments and their individual needs for training and equipment; public facilities used by Union County residents, including those facilities located in Clayton and

Des Moines, and the Clayton Livestock Research Center; outdoor recreation opportunities and assets; community health outcomes and factors, and services provided by the Union County General Hospital (UCGH); public education provided by the three school districts of Clayton, Des Moines, and Springer; and post secondary education and job training opportunities. Goals, objectives, and strategies address:

- Maintaining an adequate level of law enforcement services in Union County through completing a Public Safety Needs Assessment; pursuing a new Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Clayton and the New Mexico Corrections Department that addresses the management of the Clayton-Union County Jail; increasing the deputy staffing level and allocating funding for new equipment and vehicles; and supporting on-going training and certification for deputies.
- Increasing fire protection and emergency services in Union County through supporting on-going training and certification for volunteer firefighters and EMT's, including hazardous material accidents and wildfires; determining the equipment and facility needs at each Fire Station; and pursuing funding for improving and expanding Rabbit Ears-1 Fire Station and replacement of Amistad Fire Station with a new facility;
- Increasing Union County residents' access to public facilities and programs through working on joint use agreements with Des Moines and Clayton Municipal School Districts to allow community use of school recreational facilities; and jointly pursuing and allocating funding for the construction of a multi-generational community center in Clayton that can be used by Union County residents.
- Expanding access to health care services and clinical care through jointly creating a strategic plan that identifies incentives to attract and retain health care professional and specialists, including behavioral health, mental health, dental care, specialty care, Medicare benefit assistance, and recruitment of graduates from health care programs; working with UCGH

on a public service outreach program on available health services and preventative health measures to improve outcomes; and promoting medical school mentorship programs for recruiting high school seniors who are interested in health sciences to train them to be physicians and return to practice medicine in Union County; and

- Supporting equal access to quality education and learning opportunities through participating in annual town halls on educational initiatives; determining the potential for and feasibility of a community college satellite being established in Union County or Clayton; and disseminating information to residents on adult education programs, certificates, and classes offered at Luna, Mesalands, and Clovis Community Colleges.

### Chapter 9: Hazard Mitigation

The Hazard Mitigation Element describes the type and probability of hazards in Union County and the plans and protocols that are in place to mitigate hazards. The chapter includes key principles of hazard mitigation; hazard mitigation planning through FEMA and the ongoing Hazard Mitigation Plan by Union County; hazard mitigation and emergency preparedness; and Union County hazards, including wildfires, severe weather, emergency notification, hazardous materials, and earthquakes. Goals, objectives, and strategies address:

- Reducing Union County's vulnerability to natural hazards through completing the ongoing Hazard Mitigation Plan; installing backup generators at key facilities and shelters; providing adequate accommodations during hazard events, including food, water, medical care, and accommodations for domestic animals; and facilitating ongoing collaboration between Union County, State of New Mexico, FEMA, and the four municipalities of Clayton, Des Moines, Folsom, and Grenville on mitigating natural hazards;
- Reducing Union County's vulnerability to wildfires through developing a public information program on wildfire mitigation; developing a program for weed and brush removal along natural waterways and WUI

zones at risk for wildfires.

- Reducing Union County's vulnerability to and impact from flooding through increasing the number of rainwater basins and drainage conveyance structures; providing ongoing collaboration between Union County, US Army Corp of Engineers, and the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management on mitigating flood hazards; and participating in and remaining compliant with the National Flood Insurance Program;
- Improving Union County's capacity to respond to hazardous spills and accidents on US 87 through developing a plan for responding to hazardous spills and removals, and accidents; providing adequate equipment and ongoing training needed to respond to hazardous spills and accidents; and working with the Port of Entry in Clayton to determine when large volumes of hazardous materials are being transported through Union County.

## Chapter 10: Implementation

The Implementation element repeats the strategies contained in each of the Comprehensive Plan elements and provides a time line and responsible entity for each strategy. The time lines are categorized by short term (2020-2023), medium term (2024-2027), long term (2028-2035), and on-going, which are those actions that do not have an end date. The intent of the implementation schedule is to provide flexibility to respond to fiscal constraints and is not meant to be rigid set of rules, but rather, it is intended to provide a system of checks and balances.

### 1.4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The community engagement process included five public meetings, a community survey, and stakeholder interviews. This section provides a brief synopsis of the various elements of the community engagement process.

#### Public Meetings

The overarching goal for the public meetings was to engage as many Union County residents as possible. Given the rural nature of Union County, the strategy was to schedule meetings in different

communities. In coordination with the County Commissioners, Consensus Planning scheduled and facilitated a series of meetings in Sedan, Des Moines, and Clayton.

#### June 25-26, 2019

The first series of public meetings was held on June 25 and 26, 2019 to introduce the planning consultants; provide an overview of the planning process; ask for input on the positive aspects, issues, and future vision for Union County; and a discussion on developing a community survey to reach residents who may not have been inclined to come to a public meeting. Three meetings were held in three different locations. The first meeting was held in the afternoon at the Sedan Fire Station; the second meeting was a joint meeting with the Town of Clayton and was held at the Clayton Civic Center in the evening; and the third meeting was held the next day at the Des Moines High School. Meeting participants were asked a series of questions to guide the discussion:

- What are the special aspects about Union County that should be maintained in the future?
- What would you like to change about Union County?
- What is your vision of Union County in 2040?

The responses to these questions provided the background for the consultant to develop draft goals and objectives for each of the Comprehensive Plan elements.

#### September 25, 2019

The second public meeting was held at the Des Moines High School on September 25, 2019. The purpose of the meeting was to present and gather input on the draft goals and objectives for each Comprehensive Plan element and the draft future land use scenarios prepared by Consensus Planning. The meeting started with a brief update on the planning process timeline and an overview of the Community Survey results, which were also printed on large boards and displayed on the walls of the cafeteria.

The participants were given instructions and asked to "vote" on the draft goals and objectives



Meeting participants "voting" on draft goals and objectives at the Des Moines High School cafeteria.



under each Comprehensive Plan element. The goal was to ensure the participants had the opportunity to review each set of goals and objectives and to glean their relative priority to the meeting participants. The participants were then asked to review the two alternative future land use scenarios, which illustrated areas for commercial, housing, industrial, hospitality, RV parks, recreational corridors, agricultural industrial, renewable energy, and agriculture. Participants were encouraged to select their preferred future land use scenario and/or indicate the elements they liked from each. The participants were engaged and provided valuable input on these various elements, which is reflected in each of the Comprehensive Plan elements and the Future Land Use Scenario contained in the Land Use chapter.

### January 29, 2020

The third set of public meetings was held in Sedan and Clayton on January 29, 2020. The first public meeting was held in the afternoon at the Sedan Fire Station, followed by a public meeting in the evening at the Clayton Civic Center. The purpose of these meetings were to present the draft Comprehensive Plan and receive feedback from the participants. The Comprehensive Plan was made available prior to the public meetings on the County's website.

### May 12, 2020

The draft Comprehensive Plan was provided to the Union County Commission in March 2020 for

final review. It was subsequently adopted by the Union County Commission at a public meeting on May 12, 2020.

### Community Survey

Consensus Planning designed a Community Survey to reach a wide spectrum of Union County residents. The Community Survey contained 29 questions that were tailored to address a broad range of issues relevant to Union County residents. The questions were organized under the general categories of quality-of-life; growth and development; economic development; ranching and agriculture; transportation and road improvements; education; public services; and housing.

The Community Survey was made available online through Survey Monkey and as a hard copy for people who either do not have Internet access or were simply not inclined to take an online survey. The Community Survey was available between July 8 through August 8, 2019. A total of 145 responses were received.

The results of the Community Survey have been incorporated into the relevant Comprehensive Plan chapter (see *Appendix B for the full Community Survey results*). For instance, one of the questions asked participants to identify the three roads in Union County that were most in need of improvement. Consensus Planning created a map showing the results of that specific question, which is contained in Chapter 7: Transportation.

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Chapter 2:  
**County Profile**



## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The County Profile provides an overview of the geography, climate, and history of Union County; demographic data and trends, educational attainment, and comparisons between Union County and other counties in Northeastern New Mexico. Data for this section was sourced from the United States Census Bureau, United States Census of Agriculture, New Mexico Department of Health, and the New Mexico Department of Education.

### Community Context

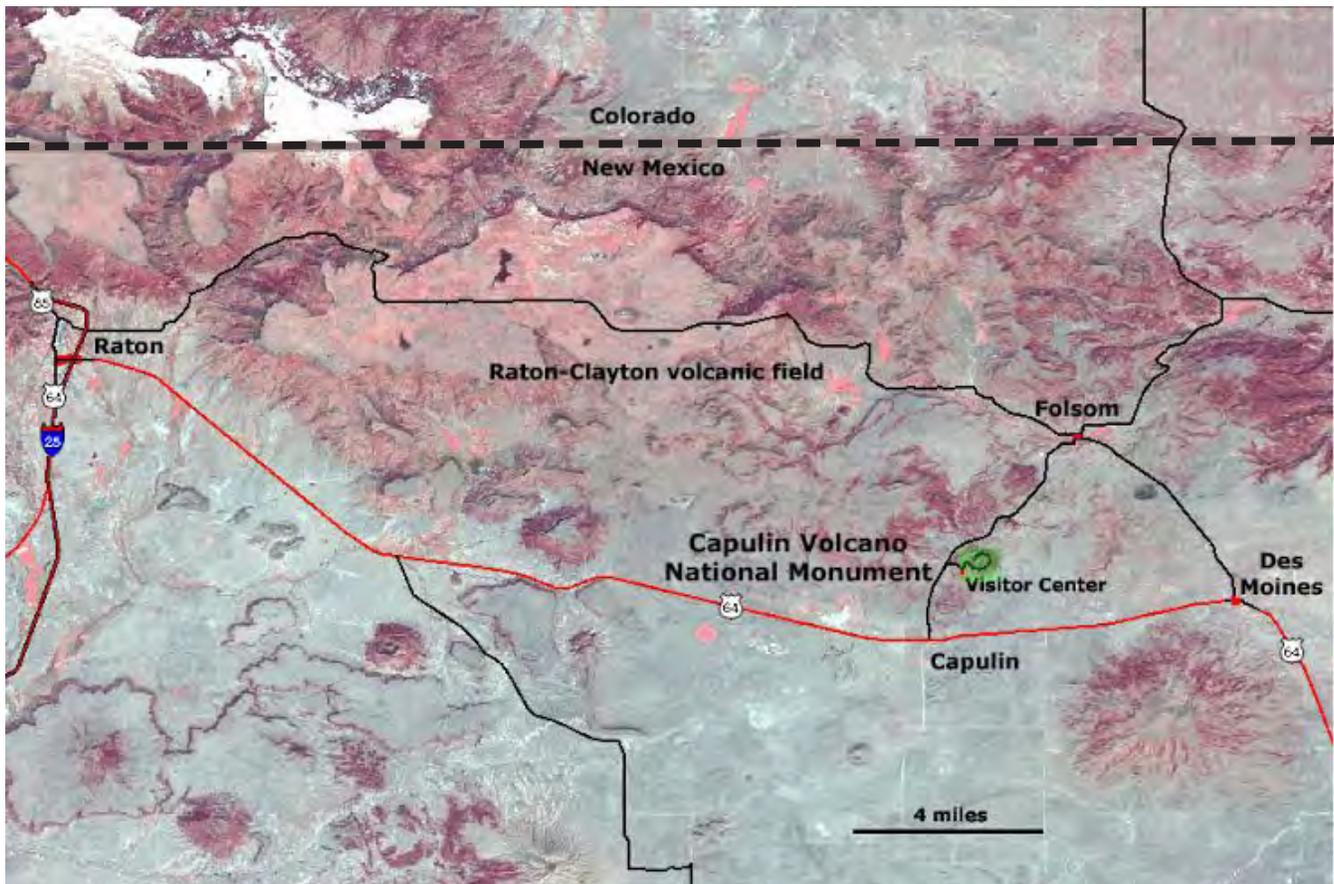
Union County is located in northeast New Mexico and bordered by Colorado, Oklahoma, and Texas. The County covers a total area of 3,831 square miles with an elevation ranging from 4,170 feet to 8,707 feet. The topography is characterized by slopes and undulations to rolling uplands with smooth valleys, basins, and plains.

Union County is home to the most significant volcanic activity east of the Rocky Mountains. The area is dotted with volcano vents and basalt flows

from millions of years ago known as the Raton-Clayton Volcanic Field. Within the Volcanic Field is the Capulin Volcano National Monument and the Sierra Grande Shield Volcano, named for its low profile and resembling a warrior's shield lying on the ground.

The winter months in Union County are cold and the summer months are milder than the rest of New Mexico. The annual high temperature of Union County is approximately 67.8 degrees Fahrenheit with an annual low temperature of 40.3 degrees Fahrenheit. Precipitation is higher between May and August with an average rainfall of approximately 15.77 inches. The annual snowfall is approximately 28 inches.

Union County is rural with a majority of its population concentrated in Clayton. Approximately 70.8% of the County's population resides in Clayton; others live in homesteads or ranches in unincorporated Union County or in communities such as Capulin, Grenville, Des Moines, Folsom,



*Raton-Clayton Volcanic Field.*

Sedan, Amistad, Gladstone, Hayden, Mount Dora, Sedan, Seneca, Sofia, or Stead.

## 2.2 UNION COUNTY HISTORY

The sources for this history section include the New Mexico Office of the State Historian, Clayton-Union County Chamber of Commerce, State Register of Cultural Properties, and the National Register of Historic Places.

The semi-arid plains and prairie of Union County have been inhabited and traveled for millions of years. Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways is home to more than 500 documented dinosaur tracks that provide evidence the area was traversed by dinosaurs traveling along the edges of an ancient sea on their way to the south. The preserved dinosaur tracks are accessible to the public, today.

The Folsom Man Archaeological Site near Folsom Village extends the history of humans in the area into 8500 BC. The Folsom Man site was discovered through a series of events. In 1908, headwaters of the dry Cimarron River rushed towards Folsom and flooded the area. A woman named Sarah “Sally” Rooke, a telephone operator, phoned as many people as she could, saving them, but perishing in the flood. She was cited as a hero, and operators from around the country honored her with a memorial placed outside the Folsom Museum. That same year, George McJunkin discovered the bison bones that had been uncovered by the flood. McJunkin was an experienced buffalo hunter; he took the bones and placed them above his mantle as keepsakes. Eventually, the word of McJunkin’s discovery spread and the site was excavated. Bones of bison with spear points stuck in their ribcages were found, providing insight that the area was used for hunting. The archaeological finds can be seen at the Denver Museum of Natural History. This site is now a National Historic Landmark.

Between the years of 1820 to 1880, people traveled the Santa Fe Trail through Union County. The Santa Fe Trail moved people and goods from the Missouri River to Santa Fe. Rabbit Ears Mountain was a landmark travelers used to guide them through the Cimarron Cutoff segment of the

Santa Fe trail in the Union County region. Travelers stopped to rest at camps in the vicinity of Rabbit Ears Mountain.

The Santa Fe Trail was a key pathway for the Westward Expansion. The Westward Expansion brought settlers in search of economic opportunity to the Union County region. The Homestead Act of 1862 made it easier for settlers to claim land. Most people who settled in the area were private ranchers or worked for a ranching company helping manage land and cattle. Cattle ranching and the sheep industry were the prominent economic drivers at the time.

Most towns and villages in Union County began as tent towns. With the coming of the railroad and an established agricultural industry, people began investing in and developing towns and villages. Clayton and Des Moines were established in 1887, Grenville was established in the late 1800’s, and Folsom was established in 1909.

The arrival of the railroad drove the boom of the area. The Denver Fort Worth Railroad Company and the Denver City Railway established a rail line through Clayton in 1888. A rail line between Santa Fe, Raton, and Des Moines was established between 1905 and 1906. Subsequently, the St. Louis, Rocky Mountain, and Pacific rail line was established in 1908. By the early 1900’s, the population of the area had reached 4,528. The railroad turned the area into a regional shipping hub and people frequently arrived by passenger train and motor vehicle. This led to the establishment of the hospitality industry. The Eklund Hotel in Clayton was built in 1891 and later, the Folsom Hotel in the 1920’s.

The hustle and bustle of the area prompted discussions to establish a new county. At the time, what is now Union County was Colfax and Mora counties. Union County was incorporated in 1892 and the Town of Clayton became the county seat. Agriculture continued to be the economic driver in Union County, and by 1910, the County grew to a population of approximately 11,400.

The original Union County Courthouse was constructed between 1894 to 1895, but was damaged by a tornado in 1908. The second and



*Union County Courthouse in Clayton.*

current courthouse was constructed between 1909 and 1910. The Union County Courthouse is the oldest county courthouse in New Mexico in continuous use.

The Great Depression reached Union County in the 1930's. Severe drought affected the agriculture industry, resulting in a loss of population as people left to find opportunities elsewhere. The Federal New Deal program introduced many community development projects in the area under the Work Progress Administration (WPA) to counteract the effects of unemployment. Projects included sidewalk construction or improvements; curb and gutter construction; school building construction, such as the Clayton School Complex and the Goodson Memorial School in Folsom; D.D. Monroe Civic Building that was formerly the Clayton Library; and the Amistad Gymnasium, among others. By 1940, Union County's population had decreased to approximately 3,000 people.

From 1940 to present day, farming has been an important economic driver in Union County. The primary crops grown in Union County are corn, beans, grain sorghums, broom corn, wheat, oats, rye, and alfalfa. The introduction of irrigated farming increased the viability of crops in the arid plains climate.

### **Black Jack Ketchum**

Thomas Edwards, known as "Black Jack" Ketchum, is the legendary train robber of Union County. Ketchum was born in 1863 in Saba County, Texas; the youngest of eight children. Ketchum's first career was as a cowboy on ranches throughout

west Texas and northern and eastern New Mexico. Ketchum's reputation as a train robber began in 1892 when he and his fellow outlaws conducted a heist on the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad just north of Deming; they rode off with \$20,000. Stories of the outlaw Ketchum Gang were well known around New Mexico, but people only knew the men as a well mannered group who frequented saloons and social functions flashing their money and calling themselves cowboys. It was not until the men were captured did the people learn of the Ketchum Gang affiliation.



*Black Jack Ketchum.*

The heist that ended Black Jack Ketchum's train robbing career occurred in Union County between Des Moines and Folsom in 1899. Ketchum hid in a cave south of Folsom until dark when he was ready to put his plan into play. He boarded the train from the baggage car and ordered the conductor at gunpoint to stop the train. Ketchum miscalculated when the train stopped on a curve, making the uncoupling of the train cars near impossible. The train conductor was prepared for such a scenario and shot Ketchum in the elbow. As he could no longer ride off on his horse, Ketchum waited for another train and turned himself in.

After Ketchum recovered from his wounds, he was taken to Santa Fe where he was placed in prison and sentenced to death by hanging. The hanging was delayed several times, until word of the Ketchum Gang's plot to rescue Ketchum reached the authorities. He was then transported to Clayton where he was hanged and decapitated on April 26, 1901. Ketchum was the only person hanged in Union County and the only person to be sentenced to death because of a train robbery. Years later, the law that sentenced him to death would be deemed unconstitutional. Stories of Black Jack Ketchum and his exploits are still told today in Union County.

## 2.3 DEMOGRAPHICS

### Historic Population

Union County’s population has fluctuated over time, mainly changing in response to economic conditions. Records in the National Register of Historic Places state Union County’s population reached approximately 11,400 people around 1910. The 1920’s Depression and Dust Bowl diminished the population as people left Union County to settle elsewhere.

As illustrated below in Figure 2.1, in 1960, the Census Bureau’s shows the population in Union County was 6,068. There was a big shift between 1960 and 1970 where the population decreased to 4,925. From that point on, the Census Bureau documented less dramatic decreases in population until 2010 when the population increased by 8% to 4,549. This increase correlates with the opening of the Northeast New Mexico Detention Facility in 2008 as the inmate population was included in the population data. Figure 2.1 also includes population projections for 2020, 2030, and 2040, as described in Section 2.4.

### Population

In 2017, the population of Union County was 4,216, which was a decrease of 7.3% from the 2010

population of 4,549. Of the total Union County 2017 population, 2,987 (70.8%) lived in Clayton. With the exception of Clayton, the communities of Capulin, Grenville, Des Moines, and Folsom all decreased in population between 2010 and 2017.

	2010	2017	% Change
UNION COUNTY	4,549	4,216	-7.3%
Clayton	2,980	2,987	0.2%
Capulin	66	60	-9.1%
Grenville	38	16	-57.9%
Des Moines	143	56	-60.8%
Folsom	56	41	-26.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

### Age Distribution

The age distribution in Union County shifted between 2010 and 2017 (see Figure 2.2). The two age cohorts that grew the most were 20 to 24 year olds with an increase of 39.1% and 80 to 84 year olds with an increase of 44.5%. The growth in these age groups provide evidence that Union County residents are aging in place. The age cohorts with the largest decrease in population are 15 to 19 years with a decrease of 58.3% and 75 to 79 years

FIGURE 2.1: UNION COUNTY HISTORIC POPULATION and PROJECTIONS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

with a decrease of 43.0%. In 2017, the median age in Union County was 40.2; significantly older than the New Mexico average of 37.3.

	2010	2017	% Change
Total Population	4,549	4,216	-7.3%
Male	2,593	2,285	-11.9%
Female	1,956	1,931	-1.3%
Median Age	40.9	40.2	-1.7%
18 years and over	3,619	3,354	-7.3%
65 years and over	813	801	-1.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates.

In 2017, the population between 20 to 24 years were the largest age cohort with 345 people, followed by 30 to 34 years with 336 people. The smallest age cohort was 75 to 79 years with 90 people.

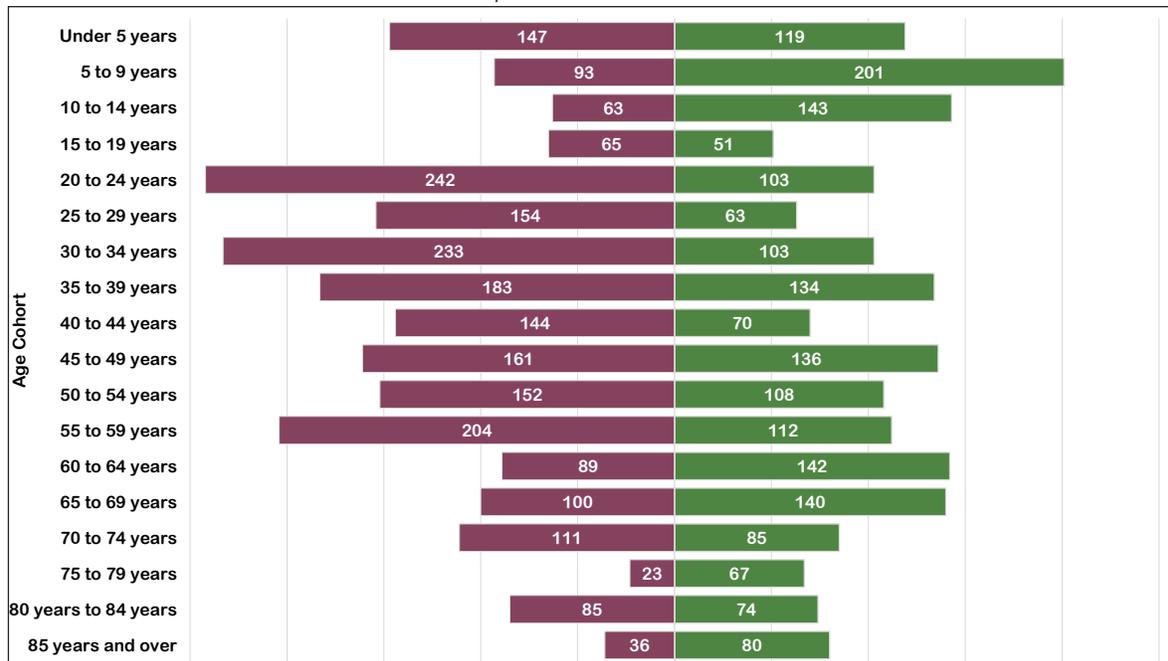
Shifts in male and female populations occurred between 2010 and 2017. The male population decreased by 11.9% from 2,593 to 2,285 and the female population decreased at a smaller rate of 1.3% from 1,956 to 1,931. In 2017, the gender ratio (number of males to females) was 118.3 males to

every 100 females. In comparison, in 2010, the ratio was 132.6 males to every 100 females.

	2010	2017	% Change
Under 5 years	257	266	3.5%
5 to 9 years	242	294	21.5%
10 to 14 years	254	206	-18.9%
15 to 19 years	278	116	-58.3%
20 to 24 years	248	345	39.1%
25 to 29 years	353	217	-38.5%
30 to 34 years	302	336	11.3%
35 to 39 years	271	317	17.0%
40 to 44 years	285	214	-24.9%
45 to 49 years	353	297	-15.9%
50 to 54 years	351	260	-25.9%
55 to 59 years	285	316	10.9%
60 to 64 years	257	231	-10.1%
65 to 69 years	246	240	-2.4%
70 to 74 years	187	196	4.8%
75 to 79 years	158	90	-43.0%
80 to 84 years	110	159	44.5%
85 years and over	112	116	3.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

FIGURE 2.2: AGE AND GENDER DISTRIBUTION, 2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

### Race and Ethnicity

As defined by the U.S. Census Bureau, Race and Ethnicity are self-identification terms in which residents choose the Race or Races and Ethnicity they most identify with. The U.S. Census Bureau defines race as a person’s self-identification with one or more social groups. Ethnicity determines whether a person is of Hispanic or Not-Hispanic or Latino origin. Hispanic ethnicity can include multiple races. In New Mexico, many individuals that identify as Hispanic identify their race as White.

Union County residents identify as 87% White, 1% Black or African American, 4% Alaska Native, 8% Some Other Race, and .02% Asian. Ethnically, 59% of the population identify as Not Hispanic or Latino and 41% of the population identify as Hispanic or Latino (of any race). In comparison, New Mexico is 52% Not-Hispanic or Latino population and 48% Hispanic population.

### Veteran Population

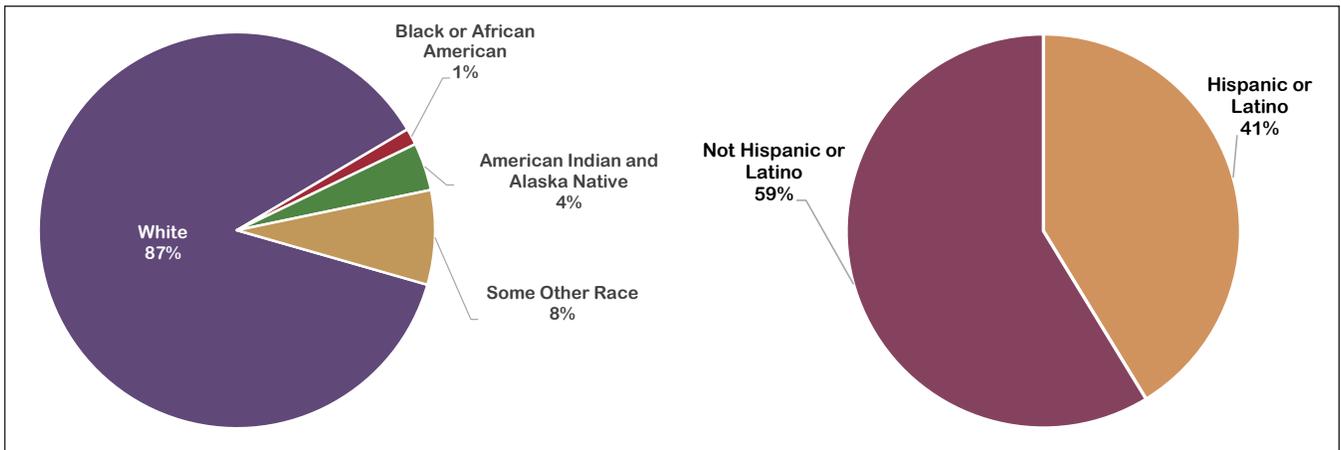
The veteran population in Union County in 2017 was 295. The veterans in retirement age (65 years and older) are 64.7% of the total veteran

population. Of the veteran population, 67.8% have various degrees of disability. Overall, the veteran population In Union County is aging and decreasing.

TABLE 2.4: VETERAN POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS			
	2010	2017	% Change
Civilian population 18 years and over	386	295	-24%
Male	338	295	-13%
Female	48	0	-100%
<b>Age</b>			
18 to 34 years	7	0	-100%
35 to 54 years	84	51	-39%
55 to 64 years	98	57	-42%
65 to 74 years	94	96	2%
75 years and over	103	91	-12%
<b>Disability</b>			
With any disability	*	67.8%	*

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2006 - 2010 & 2013-2017. \*Data was not collected in 2010.

FIGURE 2.3: UNION COUNTY RACE & ETHNICITY, 2017



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

## Birth Rates

The New Mexico Department of Health tracks birth rates for all counties in New Mexico. There were 39 births in Union County in 2017. The average number of births in the County within a 5-year span (2012 to 2017) is 39 births per year. The highest increase in birth rates occurred between 2014 and 2015 when birth rates went from 34 to 42, a 24% increase.

## 2.4 POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections for New Mexico counties are developed by the University of New Mexico Institute for Geospatial and Population Studies (GPS). The projections rely on historic growth rates and assume that growth will continue to follow historic trends. As illustrated on Figure 2.1 (see page 18), the GPS population projections for Union County show the 2020 projection at 4,512, which essentially means the population will have stagnated from the 2010 level, and then decreasing to 4,491 by 2030 and further decreasing to 4,413 by 2040. This is an overall decrease of 4.7% between 2017 and 2040. This is a reasonable assumption as the County's population has consistently decreased. However, new developments and economic conditions within Union County could alter these projections in a positive way.

## 2.5 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

It is important for communities to know the educational attainment of its population to determine the skill level of its workforce and understand the continuing education needs of adults. In 2017, among Union County's population 25 years and older, 78.9% attained high school diploma or higher. Those that attended some college, but did not obtain a degree, decreased by 27% in the same time period. The portion of the population that attained an associates degree in 2017 was 5.9%, which was an increase of 13% since 2010, but still well below the New Mexico average of 8.2%. This may be attributed to the lack of higher education institutions and opportunities within Union County.

TABLE 2.5: EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

	2010	2017	% Change
Population 25 years and over	2,880	2,989	3.8%
Less than 9th grade	2.8%	9.7%	246%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	13.1%	12.0%	-8%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	38.4%	39.9%	4%
Some college, no degree	22.6%	16.6%	-27%
Associate's degree	5.2%	5.9%	13%
Bachelor's degree	10.0%	9.9%	-1%
Graduate or professional degree	7.8%	6.0%	-23%
High School Graduate or higher	84.1%	78.9%	-6%
Bachelor's degree or higher	17.8%	15.9%	-11%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates, 2006-2010 and 2013-2017.

In 2017, Union County lagged significantly below the New Mexico average for those that have obtained bachelor's degrees or higher; 15.9% versus 26.9%. An important statistic to note for Union County was the growth in the population that completed less than 9th grade; the rate nearly tripled from 2.8% in 2010 to 9.7% in 2017. In comparison, the New Mexico average in this category was 6.5%. This trend towards a lower level of educational attainment is an issue that should be of concern and addressed by Union County leaders.

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Chapter 3:  
**Land Use**



### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The Land Use element describes the general pattern of land use within Union County and provides a framework to guide future growth and land use decisions. The Land Use element respects private property rights while striving to protect the public health, safety, and general welfare. This section discusses existing land uses, regulations, issues, and their effect on the growth and development of Union County. A Future Land Use Scenario, goals, and implementation strategies provide the basis upon which elected officials should make decisions regarding development, public lands, and land use issues.

The vast majority of Union County is rural, with the Town of Clayton being the primary commercial center that comprises over 70% of the County's population. Union County contains a mix of federal, state, and private land ownership with different use and management approaches for each. Land ownership affects how much control Union County has over development and land use. Ranching and agriculture comprise the largest land uses in Union County. Other uses, such as rural residential, commercial, and industrial, are primarily located within and surrounding the towns, villages, and communities of Union County.

### 3.2 EXISTING LAND USE

#### Agriculture

In the early 1900's, Union County was known for sheep and cattle ranching and dry farming. Climate and larger economic forces have impacted the agricultural industry in Union County since 1930. However, agriculture remains the prevailing land use across Union County. Ranches lead the overall land use and economic output, but there is also irrigated farming primarily located in the eastern part of the County, particularly around Sedan in the southeast.

Existing land uses clearly show ranching and irrigated agriculture uses as the largest uses in Union County. In addition to pasture and rangelands for cattle, and irrigated cropland, there are a number of feedlots in Union County that could present land use conflicts and other concerns, particularly when located close to areas of higher

population. Other uses, such as residential, commercial, and industrial, are concentrated within the County's municipalities and Census-designated places as described below.

#### Oil & Gas and Mining

There is land in Union County used for extraction activities, such as mining and gas production. The southern part of Union County around Hayden and west of Amistad is the primary location of oil and gas leases focused on the extraction of carbon dioxide. This extraction comes from the Bravo Dome gas field that extends into Harding County. In addition to Bravo Dome, a smaller carbon dioxide gas field exists in the northwest part of Union County near Des Moines.

These fields have historically been productive, but have experienced a decrease in overall production in recent years. OXY USA, Inc. operates a processing facility to the southwest of Hayden and Amistad along State Road 420.

#### Towns and Villages

The majority of commercial and industrial uses in Union County are located within the boundaries of the four incorporated municipalities, including Des Moines, Folsom, Grenville, and Clayton. Some of these uses are located within the County just outside of these other jurisdictions. In addition to non-residential uses, these municipalities are where the majority of the residents of Union County live, work, and go to school. As these communities might grow, particularly Clayton, the higher intensity land uses will come into contact with the more rural and agricultural uses of the County.

On the north side of Clayton, a newer single-family subdivision sits to the south of the new Stephen M. Bush Shooting Range. In addition, several homes have been built to the northeast of Clayton along U.S. Highway 64 slightly south of a large feedlot. The proximity of these land uses may raise concerns over noise, safety, groundwater contamination, or other issues by residents. Over time, it will be important to ensure these uses are adequately buffered from one another to ensure the welfare of residents, as well as the economic usefulness of these other activities.

### Clayton Business Park

The Town of Clayton annexed a large area of land for the purpose of developing the Clayton Business Park located across from the Northeast New Mexico Detention Facility along Dr. Michael Jenkins Road. Union County should be an active partner with the Town of Clayton to encourage growth of this asset for the community. If successful, the Clayton Business Park will draw jobs to the area and support County-wide taxes and other associated development. As the Business Park develops, Union County should also consider its impacts on adjacent agricultural and ranch properties not located within the Town limits, as well as potential traffic on County roads.

### Historic and Cultural Resources

Union County contains a number of historic resources that chronicle its history. Some of the historic assets have been recognized by the New Mexico Department of Historical Affairs and the National Register of Cultural Places. Union County has 15 significant registered sites (see Table 3.1). Many of these originate from Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects during the Dust Bowl and Great Depression.

## 3.3 PUBLIC LANDS

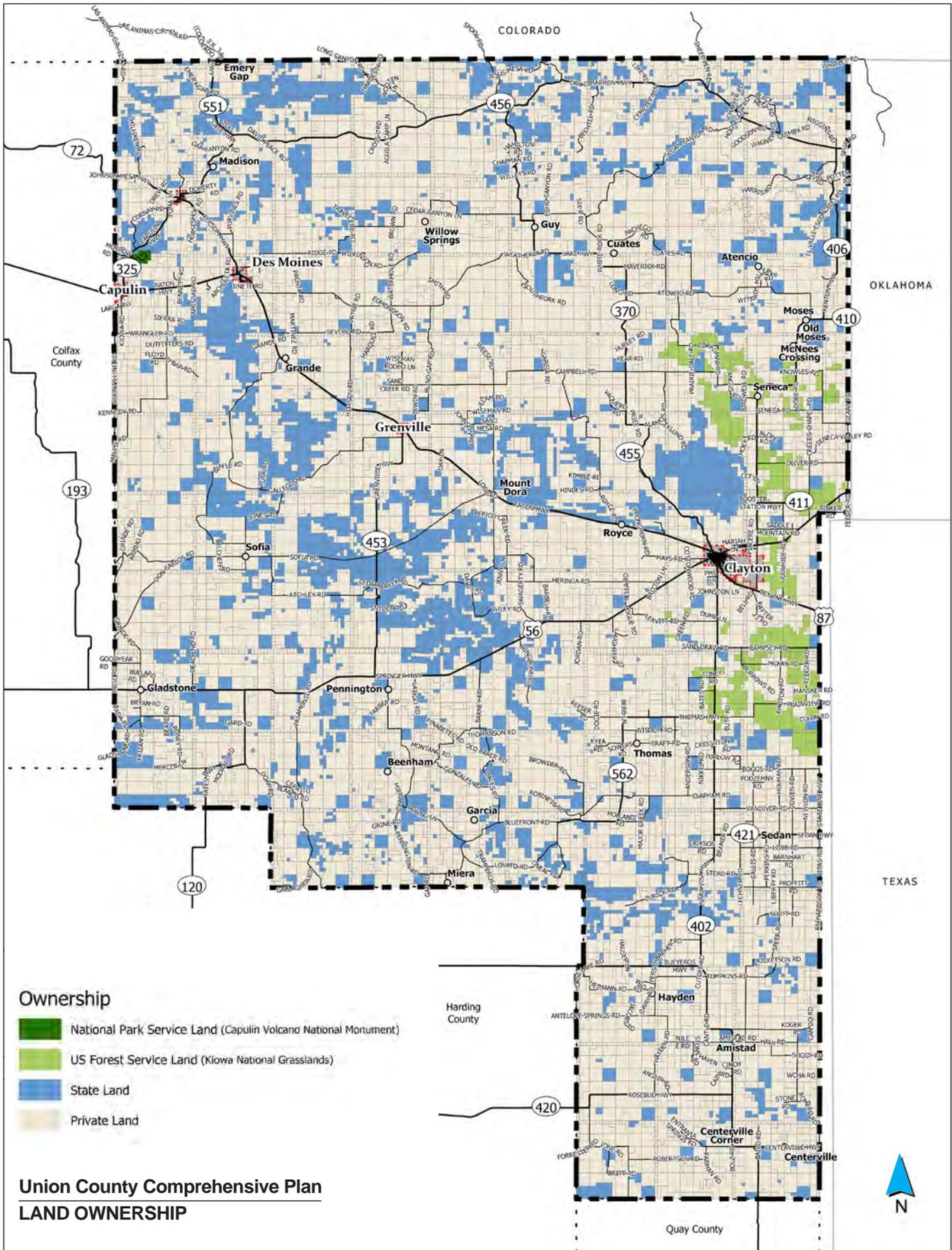
### State Land

The New Mexico State Land Office (SLO) primarily oversees state land within Union County. Land managed by the SLO is held in trust for more than 20 beneficiaries, such as public schools, state universities, hospitals, and others. The oil and gas industry, renewable energy, commercial business leases, and grazing are among the more prominent uses. According to the SLO, there are approximately 446,616 acres of State Trust Land in Union County, which accounts for 18.2% of the County land area. The majority of this land is used for grazing while a significant amount in the southern portion of the County is also used for oil and gas leases within the Bravo Dome Carbon Dioxide Unit, as described earlier in this section. There is one active lease and one pending lease for wind energy projects on State Trust Land in Union County. There are currently no solar energy projects within Union County on State Trust Land.

The other entity managing state land within Union County is New Mexico State Parks. A division of the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, State Parks has the mission to “protect

TABLE 3.1: UNION COUNTY HISTORIC RESOURCES			
Resource	Location	SR Date	NR Date
Amistad Gymnasium and School	Amistad	1/26/1996	3/15/1996
Clayton Commercial Historic District	Clayton	4/3/2009	N/A
Clayton Public Library	Clayton	4/5/2002	12/20/2002
Clayton Public Schools Historic District	Clayton	1/26/1996	3/15/1996
Eklund Hotel	Clayton	9/20/1971	1/17/2002
Gate, Fence and Hollow Tree Shelter	Clayton	4/4/2008	11/28/2008
Herzstein Memorial Museum (Methodist Episcopal Church)	Clayton	8/4/1989	N/A
Luna Theater	Clayton	8/11/2006	1/17/2007
Rabbit Ears (Clayton Complex) National Historic Landmark	Clayton	11/6/1970	10/15/1966
Union County Courthouse	Clayton	8/22/1975	12/7/1987
Folsom Hotel	Folsom	7/18/1969	5/14/1987
Folsom Museum	Folsom	7/18/1969	N/A
Stalder Mercantile	Grenville	2/1/2002	N/A
Goodson Memorial School	Kenton, Oklahoma*	2/1/2002	1/8/2003
Santa Fe Trail: Magazine Ruts Segment	Union County	2/17/2012	N/A

Source: New Mexico Historic Preservation Division. “SR Date” refers to the State Register of Cultural Properties; “NR Date” refers to the National Register of Historic Places. \*This resource is in the vicinity, but listed as Union County.



and enhance natural and cultural resources, provide first-class recreational and education facilities and opportunities, and promote public safety to benefit and enrich the lives of visitors.” The Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways, located along Clayton Lake Road (State Highway 370), is the only designated State Park within Union County, and is approximately 572 acres in size consisting of 170 acres in water surface area and 402 acres of land surrounding the Lake. Activities at the State Park include boating, camping, and hiking. Visitors can get a glimpse of the past by viewing the prehistoric Dinosaur Trackways or the night sky from the Star Point Observatory.

### Federal Land

There is less overall federal land ownership, approximately 2.4%, in Union County than in other New Mexico counties. The U.S. Forest Service owns and manages the Kiowa National Grasslands, in addition to additional grasslands north of Roy and within Texas and Oklahoma. In total, the Kiowa National Grasslands comprise approximately 136,505 acres; the area within Union County is approximately 58,000 acres.

The National Park Service manages the Capulin Volcano National Monument in the northwest part of Union County, near Des Moines. The Monument contains 793 acres and is a significant landmark for Union County and northeastern New Mexico. As important stakeholders to these public lands, Union County elected officials and residents should be involved in any planning and decision-making by both of these agencies, as those decisions will have an impact in the community.

## 3.4 LAND USE REGULATIONS

### Subdivision Ordinance

The Union County Subdivision Ordinance (No. 21-1997) regulates land divisions and platting in the unincorporated areas of the County. The Ordinance also establishes concurrent jurisdiction over the territory within the platting jurisdiction of both the County and municipalities, as provided by state law. The 1997 Ordinance replaced Union County’s original 1974 subdivision regulations, but it has not been amended since that time.

The purpose of the subdivision regulations are to:

- Protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of the County;
- Guide future growth and development in accordance with any official plans adopted by the County;
- Provide adequate light, air, and privacy; prevent overcrowding of land and undue congestion of population; protect and conserve the value of land and buildings;
- Minimize the conflicts among the uses of land and buildings;
- Provide for the most beneficial relationship between land uses and traffic circulation to avoid congestion;
- Establish reasonable standards of design for subdivisions; and
- Prevent the pollution of air, streams, and ponds while assuring adequacy of drainage and safeguarding the water table.

The subdivision process includes a pre-application conference, followed by preliminary plat review, final plat review, and a summary review procedure. Preliminary plats, final plats, and summary review plats are all reviewed at a public hearing by the Board of County Commissioners. There are special procedures for succeeding subdivisions, resubdivision, vacation of plats, variances, and exemptions.

### Swine Production Ordinance

Union County adopted the Swine Production Ordinance (No. 21) in 1998. A swine production operation is defined as a facility with more than 100 such animals for 45 days or more within a one-year period. The purpose of the Ordinance is to:

- Provide for controlled development of swine production facilities;
- Provide a healthy and stable swine production industry in the County;
- Insure density of swine and swine operations do not exceed levels reasonable required to protect the quality of life of County residents; and
- Prevent production of facilities that may be offensive to members of the public.

The Swine Production Ordinance was intended to establish reasonable standards to further the

compatibility of swine operations with residential, business, recreational, and other agricultural and industrial uses in Union County. Such standards include location prohibitions within specified distances of certain locations, including:

- Within five miles of the Town of Clayton;
- Within three miles of the Town of Des Moines or any state or federal recreational site;
- Within two miles of the villages of Grenville or Folsom;
- Within one mile of any running stream, seasonal creek, or spring;
- Within one mile of any residential dwelling without written consent of the owner of the dwelling; and
- Within one-half mile of any paved roadway.

Other regulations stipulate a minimum of 160 acres for each facility and limit swine production facilities to 5% land space of the operation holdings for a particular location. The number of animals is capped at 20 per acre of the operation premises. The regulations also require total confinement systems to hold animals within enclosed barns. The County Commission holds public hearings on applications under this Ordinance, and other procedures for variances, appeals, inspections, and enforcement are included.

### Outdoor Lighting Ordinance

Union County adopted the Outdoor Lighting Ordinance (No. 36) in 2008 to:

- Improve nighttime safety and security;
- Promote energy efficiency;
- Reduce lighting that is detrimental to the environment or to the use and enjoyment of public and private property; and
- Preserve and promote the dark sky resources of Union County.

The Town of Clayton followed Union County's lead by adopting its own lighting ordinance. The two ordinances are nearly identical with some minor differences, and specify certain standards to prevent spillage of light onto adjacent properties through shielding and downlighting. Other standards include limitations on height and maximum lumens output from fixtures. Unlike Clayton, the Union County Ordinance provides a process for requesting a temporary exemption from the requirements. There

is a grandfathering clause in the Ordinance for lights that existed at the time of adoption, but all fixtures should have come into compliance within 10 years of its effective date or by October 19, 2018. These actions helped result in Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways earning an International Dark Sky Park designation in 2010.

### Rural Addressing Ordinance

The Union County Rural Addressing Ordinance was adopted on October 12, 1999 (No. 22). The purpose of the Ordinance is to "enhance the easy and rapid location of properties by law enforcement, fire rescue, and emergency medical service personnel in Union County, New Mexico." Administered by the Rural Addressing Department, the Ordinance requires the naming of roads and numbering of all properties in the County. As new structures are built or placed within Union County, and when new subdivisions are proposed, road names and addresses must be reviewed and approved by the Rural Addressing Department. This is done at the time the state issues a building or septic permit or when the subdivision is submitted to the County. The Rural Addressing Department maintains a community map showing road names and/or numbers; a listing of road names and address ranges for each; and a listing of all assigned addresses.

### Wind Energy Siting Ordinance

The Union County Wind Energy Siting Ordinance was adopted on October 22, 2009 (No. 40). The purpose of the Ordinance is to:

- Ensure the development and production of wind-generated electricity is safe and effective;
- Acknowledge that while the facilities are clearly visible, design considerations should include minimizing the visual character of the area;
- Facilitate economic opportunities for local residents; and
- Promote wind energy in support of New Mexico's goal of increasing renewable energy production.

The Wind Energy Siting Ordinance provides for a preliminary plan review and siting approval application processes. Requirements of the Ordinance address design safety certification, color,

signage, warnings, climb prevention, setbacks, the use of public roads during construction, and decommissioning.

### 3.5 LAND USE ISSUES

#### Urban/Rural Interface

There is no zoning within the unincorporated area of Union County; therefore, there are no land use controls on where different land uses can be located. There is also no requirement to buffer incompatible uses, except for specific uses such as swine production and wind energy generation, which are addressed in their respective adopted ordinances. These issues are mostly felt at the interface between the more rural County and municipalities where people may live in homes that are on the edge of this urban/rural interface.

The Town of Clayton has not established extraterritorial zoning or planning and platting jurisdiction within Union County. An example of this urban/rural interface is between the new Stephen M. Bush Shooting Range located on Clayton Lake Road (State Highway 370) near a newer residential subdivision in Clayton to the south. While adopting County zoning is not necessary, Union County officials should consider partnerships and cooperation with the Town and other jurisdictions that may want to provide input on development and uses occurring in close proximity to residential development.

#### Code Enforcement and Nuisance Abatement

Approximately 70% of respondents to the Community Survey stated they agreed or strongly agreed that the visual appearance of Union County should be improved. However, Union County does not currently have code enforcement or other provisions for the upkeep of properties. In addition, there is no local building code enforcement and any construction within the County must follow the State Building Code. Permits and inspections are done by the New Mexico Construction Industries Division, but due to the long distance from the nearest CID office, getting these permits and inspections completed is challenging and may lead to work that is done illegally. Union County may want to consider adopting an ordinance with certain minimum standards relating to the condition and

appearance of properties in the County, and hiring or delegating authority to a code enforcement staff person to implement the regulations.

#### Rangeland Management

As agriculture and ranching are core aspects of the Union County economy and represent primary land uses, it is critical to think about the future of these uses given aging populations and strains on water resources due to drought and other factors. In order to preserve this diverse industry, new approaches and management practices should be considered. Rangeland and other land management practices include regenerative agricultural practices, participation in the Conservation Reserve Program, and decreased usage of fertilizers and chemical insect control.

Regenerative agricultural practices include rotational grazing, dryland farming, and crop rotation, among others. These practices aid soil health and reduce erosion, which has increased on New Mexico cropland by 80% since 2002 (*Source: Report on Resilience in New Mexico Agriculture, New Mexico First and NMSU*). Rotational grazing, which is sometimes referred to as regenerative or holistic ranching, in particular, could be a useful practice in Union County. This practice involves moving groups of cattle between multiple pastures instead of free roaming and continual grazing. By gathering and moving cattle, rotational grazing prevents overgrazing and allows the grasses to recover. These grazing practices promote healthy groundcover that reduces erosion and is able to better capture rainwater.

The Conservation Reserve Program provides farm owners with an annual rent payment in exchange for removing their land from production and planting species that will improve the overall environmental quality of the land. Removal of cropland from production should be balanced against other techniques that may achieve the dual objectives of sustainable conservation and productive economic use, but may be appropriate in certain instances. Examples include locations of highly erodible soils and around playa lakes where water quality and infiltration are particularly important.

Other prevalent issues in New Mexico include land diversion from agriculture and grazing to other



*Union County rangeland.*

uses and difficulties associated with federal land management. Fortunately, Union County does not have as much federal land as other parts of New Mexico (approximately 2.4%). As such, fewer issues are likely to arise over allotments although there is a large amount of state-owned land (approximately 18.3%). Due to the high percentage of private ownership (approximately 79.4%), land diversion could be an issue as farmers and ranchers age and sell land for other uses.

Union County's distance from highly urbanized areas may limit this as there may be less demand to convert to other uses; however, the County and private property owners could consider a variety of methods to keep rangeland in production. Methods could include public financing methods, conservation easement programs, or creating zoning regulations. These methods to keep rangeland in production, coupled with strategies to maintain the health of these lands, could keep Union County's ranching economy strong moving forward. The New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service provides knowledge and programs to support farmers and ranchers and their quality of life, including range land management. A local NMSU Extension office for Union County is located in Clayton.

### Renewable Energy

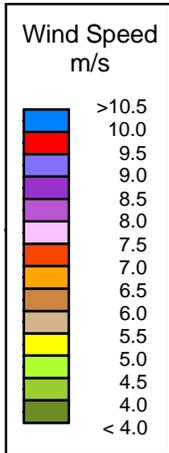
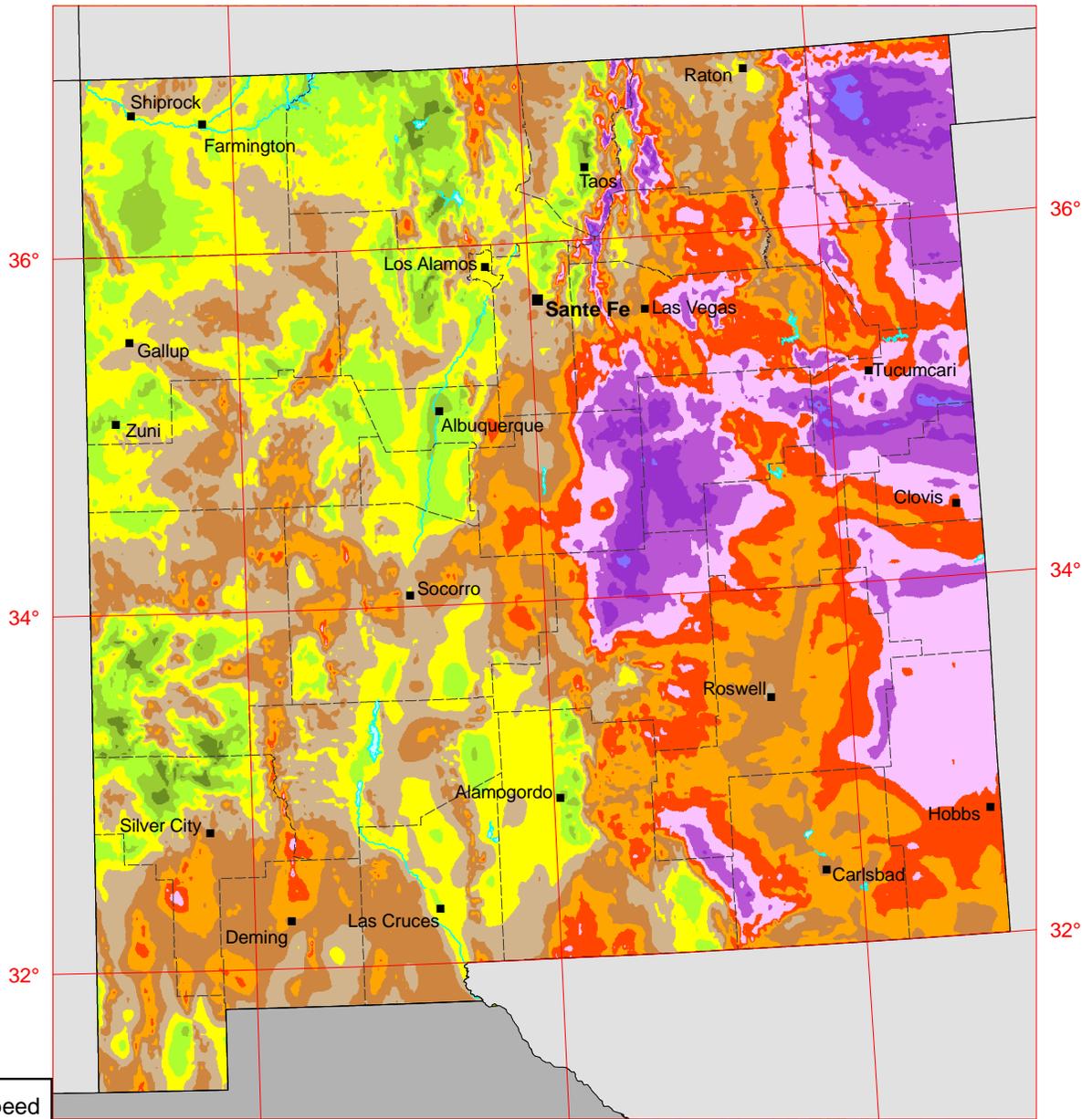
Union County has recognized its potential for wind energy projects through the passage of its Wind

Energy Siting Ordinance. As previously mentioned, there are two active or pending wind energy projects on State Trust Land in Union County. One of these, located south of Des Moines and west of Grenville, includes 19,000 acres of State Trust Land along with 31,000 acres of private land. Respondents to the Comprehensive Plan Community Survey agreed or strongly agreed (68%) that renewable energy, such as wind, solar, and biofuels, should be expanded in the County.

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), Union County has some of the highest potential wind resources in New Mexico at 80 meters (*see NREL map on next page*). This resource, combined with ample open lands, is an important opportunity for Union County and is described in more detail in Chapter 4: Economic Development.

In addition to wind resources, New Mexico has high potential for solar energy. Similar to wind, the availability of land in Union County could be utilized for larger-scale solar facilities. Such facilities would contribute to New Mexico's stated goal of 100% renewable energy sources by 2045, as well as a source of jobs and economic growth for the County. According to information from the American Planning Association and Solar Energy Industry Association, while New Mexico has high potential for solar as a southwestern state, it currently lags behind its neighbors in installed capacity.

### New Mexico - Annual Average Wind Speed at 80 m



Source: Wind resource estimates developed by AWS Truepower, LLC for windNavigator®. Web: <http://www.windnavigator.com> | <http://www.awstruepower.com>. Spatial resolution of wind resource data: 2.5 km. Projection: UTM Zone 12 WGS84.



**AWS Truepower™**  
Where science delivers performance.



Should Union County consider promoting larger, utility-scale solar installations, it may want to consider the land use impacts of such facilities much like it does for wind energy facilities through the Wind Energy Siting Ordinance. Utility-scale solar facilities are generally two acres or greater in size and capacities of more than one megawatt (MW). They could be thousands of acres in size and include substations to transfer power to the electrical grid. Such facility proposals must be evaluated regarding their size and scale; the conversion of agricultural or other lands to industrial-scale use; and potential environmental, social, and economic impacts to nearby properties in the way of views, erosion, and sediment control, etc. Similar to the Wind Energy Siting Ordinance requirements, utility-scale solar should be permitted and monitored through decommissioning.

Installation of solar and wind energy facilities could have enormous positive economic impacts for Union County. These facilities should be part of an overall land use and development strategy that strikes a balance between these industrial-scale uses while maintaining rural agricultural lands for ranching and farming, as well as the integrity of important scenic locations for tourism and outdoor recreation.

### Transmission Infrastructure

While Union County has high potential for wind energy and other renewable energy projects, there is currently a lack of transmission infrastructure to move electricity produced to markets where it can be used. New transmission lines will be required to connect new facilities such as the proposed Triangle Gallegos Wind Farm to the electrical grid. The Lucky Corridor and Mora Line are examples of such transmission projects. The Mora Line will connect Union County to Springer and south to Las Vegas and is designed to carry 180 MW at 115 kV over 110 miles. The Lucky Corridor connects from the Springer substation west to Taos and is designed to carry 850 MW at 345 kV over 62 miles. These lines are part of an overall update to the western utility grid that will connect renewable energy sources that could replace coal-fired generating facilities, particularly those in the Four Corners region.

## 3.6 FUTURE LAND USE SCENARIO

The Future Land Use Scenario provides guidance to direct the growth and development of Union County over the next 20 years. The Future Land Use Scenario builds on existing land uses and assumes a continued focus on agriculture and ranching, as well as diversification with renewable energy and agricultural-related industrial uses. Population growth with related residential uses are concentrated near existing communities, such as Amistad, Capulin, Clayton, Des Moines, Folsom, Grenville, and Sedan. Industrial uses are located along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor of US 87/64. Commercial uses are contemplated near the intersections of roadways throughout Union County. The Future Land Use Scenario also includes “Gateways” and “Recreation Loops” that are intended to call attention to and promote tourist destinations and related activities, including Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways, Capulin Volcano National Monument, Santa Fe Trail National Scenic Byway, Folsom Man Archaeological Site, Folsom Village, etc.

### Rural Residential

Rural residential is characterized by a low-density development pattern with homes on larger lots and some small-scale agricultural activities. Future residential development is located in close proximity to other existing developed areas, primarily surrounding the Town of Clayton. Smaller areas are on the west side of Grenville, south of Des Moines and outside of Capulin and Folsom. Other residential areas are located south of Clayton along NM 402 outside of Amistad and Sedan, as well as north of Clayton along NM 406 near Seneca. This category makes up nearly all of the future residential growth in Union County.

### Commercial

Commercial development is located at key intersections throughout Union County. These intersections are typically major roadways, such as the State and US Highway networks. These corridors are often on roadways identified for Recreation Loops where new commercial can serve tourists visiting Union County, in addition to providing residents with goods and services.

### Highway Commercial

Highway commercial land use is identified primarily along US Highway 87/64, US Highway 56, and NM 402 near Amistad. These areas are intended to serve travelers along those corridors that connect to neighboring communities outside of Union County.

### Hospitality

Hospitality land use is located near Capulin, Des Moines, and Folsom to serve visitors to Capulin Volcano National Monument and the future “Volcanic Triangle Loop”. In addition, hospitality in these areas can serve travelers between Raton, Clayton, and Texline, Texas and destinations beyond. Hospitality is also possible near Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways to serve visitors there as another destination on the “Union County Recreation Loop”.

### RV Park

This use is proposed in two locations, including an area to the northeast of Des Moines and another area near Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways. This use is intended to serve visitors to the tourist destinations of Capulin Volcano National Monument and Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways. Development of RV parks in these two areas should be carefully designed and planned so as to not detract from these important Union County recreational assets.

### Industrial

Industrial areas are shown west of Clayton, east of Grenville, and southeast of Des Moines. These locations have easy access to the BNSF Railroad and US Highway 64/87, both of which connect Union County to larger markets outside of New Mexico.

### Agricultural Industrial

Farther away from the heavily traveled Ports-to-Plains Corridor, Agricultural Industrial is designated to provide areas appropriate for lesser intense development that can take advantage of proximity to agricultural resources that may be utilized by businesses developing in these areas.

### Industrial/Renewable Energy

The Future Land Use Scenario shows five general areas appropriate for Industrial/Renewable Energy land use. These are large areas appropriate for industrial scale wind or solar energy uses. The

largest of the five areas is the future 50,000-acre Triangle Gallegos Wind Farm. This use is also shown in an area west of Des Moines and US 64; an area in the southeast corner of Union County adjacent to the Colfax and Harding county lines; an area north of Grenville; and an area southeast of Amistad. Union County is well-positioned for new wind and solar energy projects, as well as energy transmission, over the next 10 to 20 years, particularly as the State of New Mexico strives to meet its ambitious renewable energy goals.

### Irrigated Agriculture

The Future Land Use Scenario maintains the existing large areas of irrigated agriculture located primarily along the eastern part of Union County in the areas around Amistad, Sedan, Thomas, etc. There are also some scattered areas in the northern part of Union County along NM 456 that follow the Cimarron River.

### Grazing/Ranch Lands

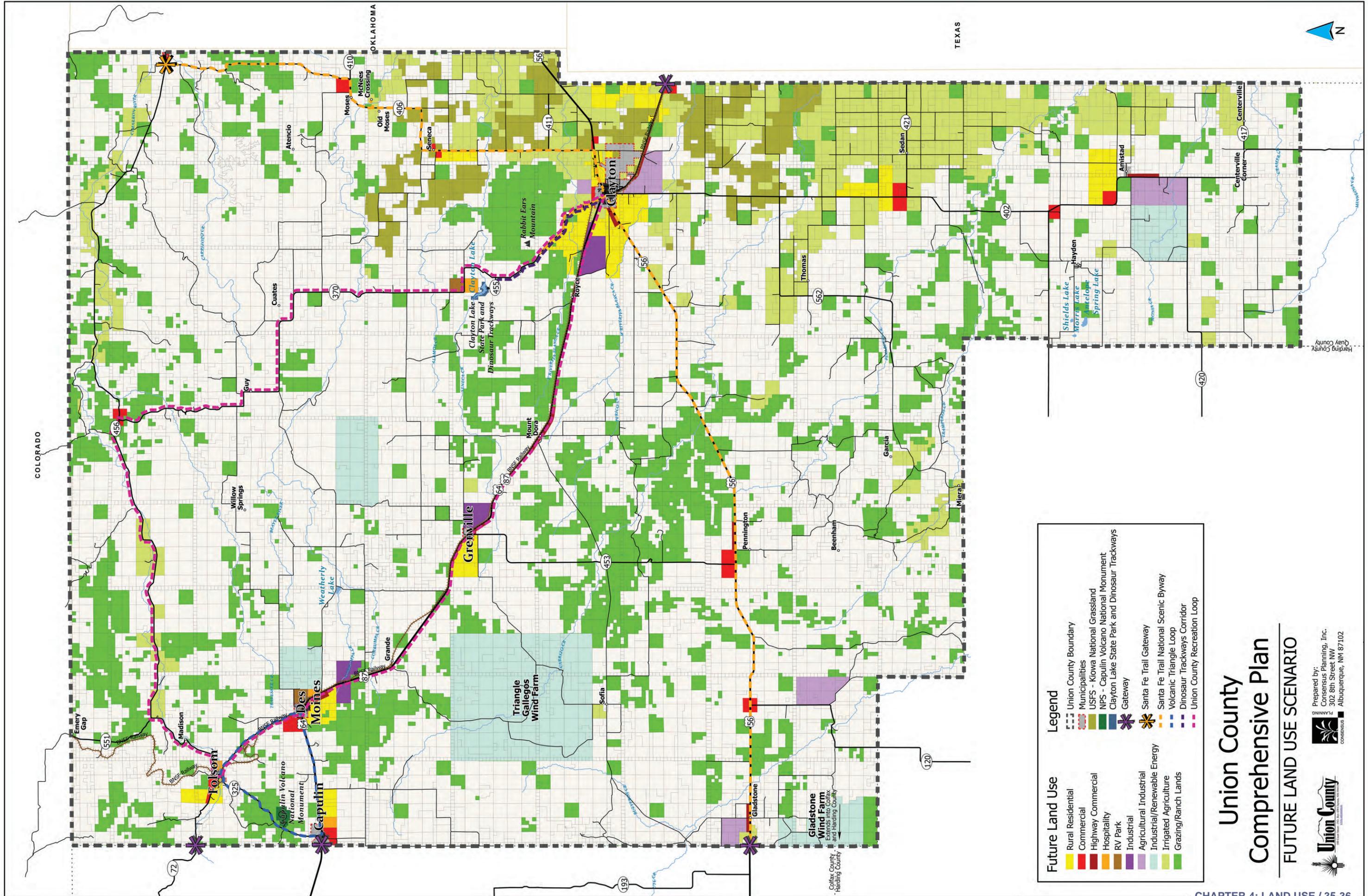
Generally, the remaining portions of Union County under private ownership that are currently used for ranching remain that way under the Future Land Use Scenario. While not expected to expand, ranching will continue to be an important land use and economic driver for Union County for the foreseeable future.

### Gateways

Five gateways are illustrated on major corridors as they enter Union County. These include on both ends of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor as it enters Union County on US 64 and US 87; west of Gladstone on US Highway 56; and on NM 72 between Folsom and Raton. The final gateway is related to the Santa Fe Trail National Scenic Byway and is located near the Oklahoma border at the intersection of NM 406 and NM 456. Gateways will provide consistent branding of Union County for visitors and the opportunity to promote local attractions.

### Recreational Corridors

In addition to the Santa Fe Trail National Scenic Byway, the Future Land Use Scenario illustrates three recreational corridors that are intended to enhance opportunities for tourism and the promotion of local scenic and outdoor recreational



**Future Land Use**

- Rural Residential
- Commercial
- Highway Commercial
- Hospitality
- RV Park
- Industrial
- Agricultural/Industrial
- Industrial/Renewable Energy
- Irrigated Agriculture
- Grazing/Ranch Lands

**Legend**

- Union County Boundary
- Municipalities
- USFS - Kiowa National Grassland
- NPS - Capulin Volcano National Monument
- Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways Gateway
- Santa Fe Trail Gateway
- Santa Fe Trail National Scenic Byway
- Volcanic Triangle Loop
- Dinosaur Trackways Corridor
- Union County Recreation Loop

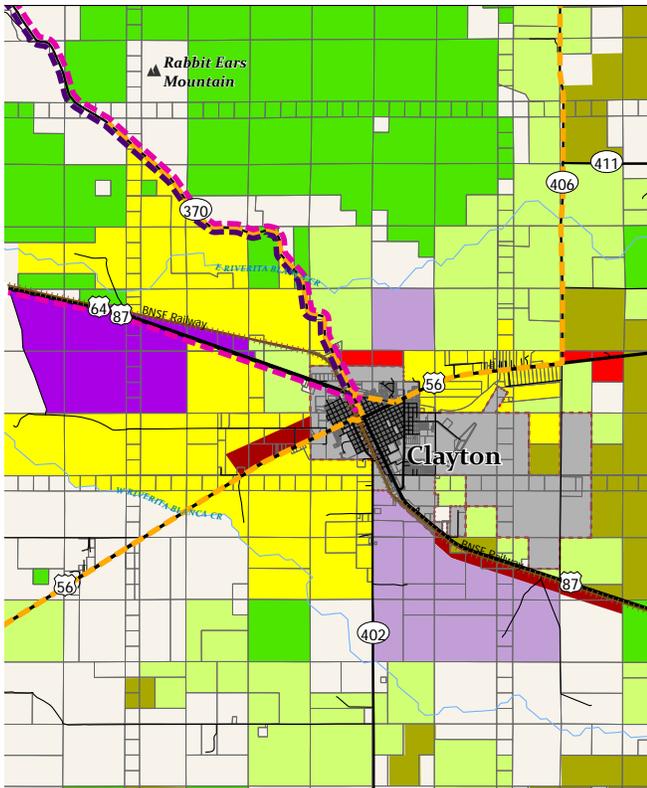
# Union County Comprehensive Plan

## FUTURE LAND USE SCENARIO

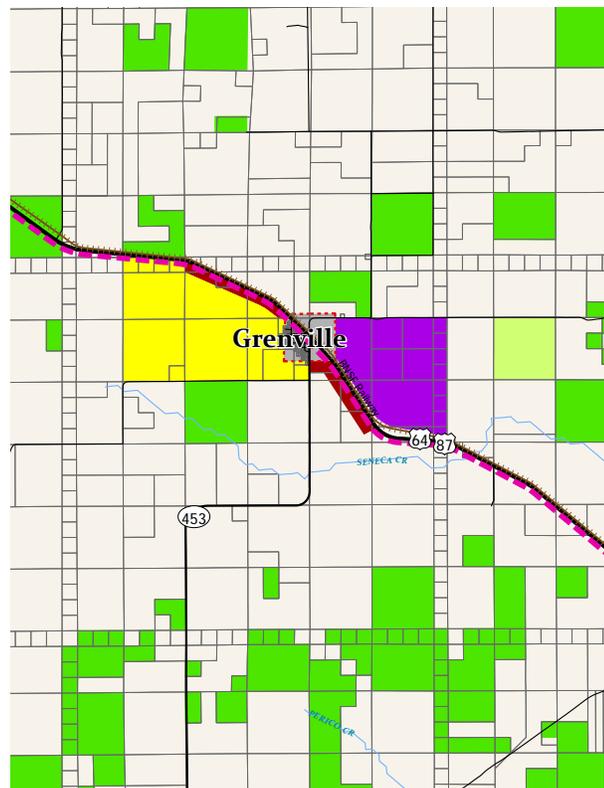
Prepared by:  
 Consensus Planning, Inc.  
 302 8th Street NW  
 Albuquerque, NM 87102







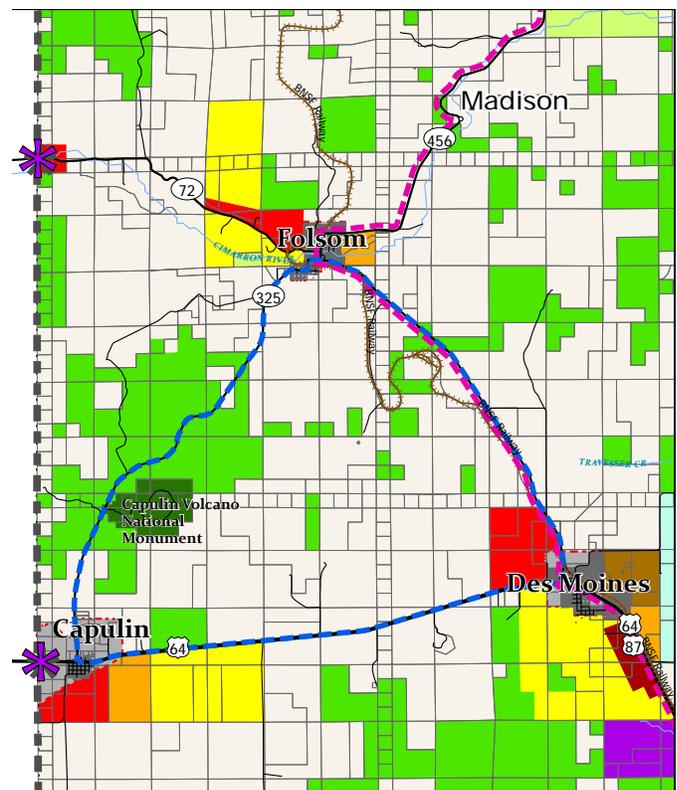
Clayton Area



Grenville Area

The three maps on this page are insets from the Future Land Scenario provided on the previous page.

- Upper left - shows the area on the Preferred Land Use Scenario around the Town of Clayton;
- Below right - shows the area on the Preferred Land Use Scenario around the Village of Grenville; and
- Bottom left - shows the areas on the Preferred Land Use Scenario around Folsom, Des Moines, and Capulin.



Folsom, Des Moines, and Capulin Areas

Future Land Use

- Yellow: Rural Residential
- Red: Commercial
- Dark Red: Highway Commercial
- Orange: Hospitality
- Brown: RV Park
- Purple: Industrial
- Light Purple: Agricultural Industrial
- Light Green: Industrial/Renewable Energy
- Light Yellow: Irrigated Agriculture
- Dark Green: Grazing/Ranch Lands

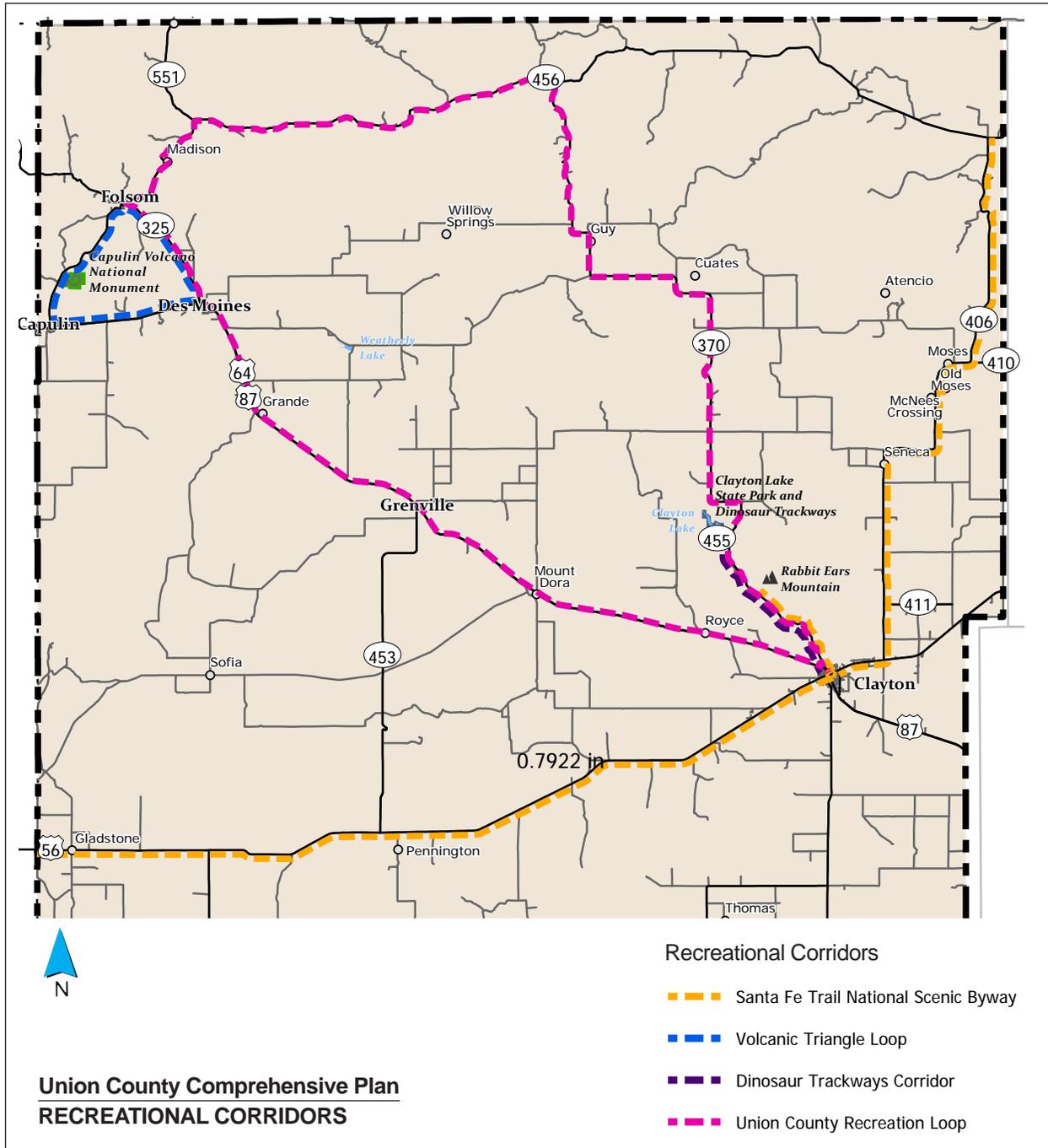
Legend

- Dashed line: Union County Boundary
- Red outline: Municipalities
- Green outline: USFS - Kiowa National Grassland
- Dark Green outline: NPS - Capulin Volcano National Monument
- Blue outline: Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways
- Purple asterisk: Gateway
- Yellow asterisk: Santa Fe Trail Gateway
- Orange line: Santa Fe Trail National Scenic Byway
- Blue line: Volcanic Triangle Loop
- Dark Blue line: Dinosaur Trackways Corridor
- Pink line: Union County Recreation Loop

attractions, including Capulin Volcano National Monument, Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways, Clayton Lake Observatory, and the Santa Fe Trail National Scenic Byway.

As shown in the enlarged map below, the “Volcanic Triangle Loop” connects Capulin to the National Monument, Folsom, and Des Moines. The “Dinosaur Trackways Corridor” provides a connection from Clayton to Clayton Lake State

Park and Dinosaur Trackways. A larger “Union County Recreation Loop” makes a connection between the two smaller corridors and other areas in northern Union County. From Folsom, it travels east on NM 456 to NM 370 where it turns south toward Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways and Clayton. The Recreation Loop then travels US Highway 64/87 through Grenville to Des Moines and back to Folsom on NM 325.



## 3.7 LAND USE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and STRATEGIES

### LAND USE GOAL 1

**Promote new growth and development in appropriate areas of Union County.**

**Objectives:**

- *To identify areas in unincorporated Union County for future housing, commercial, and industrial development.*
- *To provide a more sustainable and enhanced lifestyle for residents of Union County.*
- *To ensure new commercial and industrial uses are sited appropriately in areas that are not harmful to existing residential development and have access to existing roadways.*

#### Land Use Strategy 1.1

Promote new growth and development in key locations within unincorporated Union County utilizing the Future Land Use Scenario and within the general parameters of low density residential development in proximity to the existing municipalities; commercial development along key highway corridors, intersections, and in proximity to the railroad; industrial development in areas appropriate for energy generation; hospitality and lodging in proximity to Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways and Capulin Volcano National Monument; etc.

#### Land Use Strategy 1.2

Create an inventory of available properties for commercial and/or industrial development. Include County-owned excess properties. Once complete, promote the inventory to generate interest from builders and developers.

#### Land Use Strategy 1.3

Engage with the owners of vacant properties shown on the Future Land Use Scenario to determine their potential interest in making their property available for development.

#### Land Use Strategy 1.4

Develop and incorporate criteria into development standards that address site planning; access to the County's roadway

system; lighting; and buffering between non-compatible industrial or heavy commercial uses and residential use.

### LAND USE GOAL 2

**Protect and preserve ranching and agriculture in Union County.**

**Objectives:**

- *To ensure agriculture and ranching remain as primary land uses.*
- *To ensure state and federal plans for public lands do not inhibit agricultural activities in Union County.*
- *To promote best practices in rangeland management and regenerative agriculture.*

#### Land Use Strategy 2.1

Adopt a "Right to Farm" ordinance to address and protect the property right of existing agricultural producers operating within generally accepted agricultural practices and in conformity with federal, state, and local laws from potential nuisance suits.

#### Land Use Strategy 2.2

Continue to work with and encourage ranchers to incorporate the best practices in rangeland management, regenerative agriculture, and cattle processing researched and recommended by the Clayton Livestock Research Center.

#### Land Use Strategy 2.3

Establish an agricultural committee comprised of agricultural producers that will be tasked with the review of new land use regulations that may impact their operations.

### LAND USE GOAL 3

**Improve the visual appearance of Union County.**

**Objectives:**

- *To preserve the scenic value of major highway corridors and provide a welcoming entrance into Union County.*
- *To promote and encourage community pride and investment.*
- *To remove inoperable vehicles, dilapidated structures, and overgrown vegetation in unincorporated areas of Union County.*

**Land Use Strategy 3.1**

Sponsor and promote community clean-up events on a biannual basis where residents can dispose of trash in a safe and sustainable manner in designated collection sites. Rotate the collection sites between different areas of Union County.

**Land Use Strategy 3.2**

Develop a Nuisance Ordinance for the unincorporated areas of Union County that prohibits the maintenance or improper storage of junked or abandoned vehicles, parts, appliances, etc., dilapidated structures, and overgrown vegetation. The ordinance should address the list of prohibited items, notification procedures to the property owner, and civil penalties and remedies for non-compliance.

**Land Use Strategy 3.3**

Create a brand for Union County and incorporate the brand into community gateways at the major entries welcoming visitors to the County, as designated on the Future Land Use Scenario. The five gateway locations are located on the west Union County line at US 64, US 56, and NM 72; and the east Union County line at US 87 and NM 456.

**Land Use Strategy 3.4**

As new renewable energy projects come to fruition, incorporate criteria that considers the impact of scenic quality in the County's design review process.

**Land Use Strategy 3.5**

Consider adopting a sign ordinance that regulates billboards and other signage along the major highways within Union County.

**Land Use Strategy 3.6**

Provide adequate staffing levels to enforce Union County ordinances related to dilapidated structures, abandoned/inoperable vehicles, junk, and overgrown vegetation.

Chapter 4:

# Economic Development



## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of economic development is to build upon existing strengths and maintain a strong, vibrant local economy to improve the quality of life for all residents. Successful economic development requires coordinated efforts between regional partners to create and retain jobs, increase wages, and find new avenues for growth. Union County has traditionally relied on agriculture as its economic base. Today, many County residents are employed in education, health care, and public administration. The Economic Development element provides a comprehensive overview of the Union County economy and offers recommendations for future economic development opportunities.

## 4.2 ECONOMIC PROFILE

### Occupations

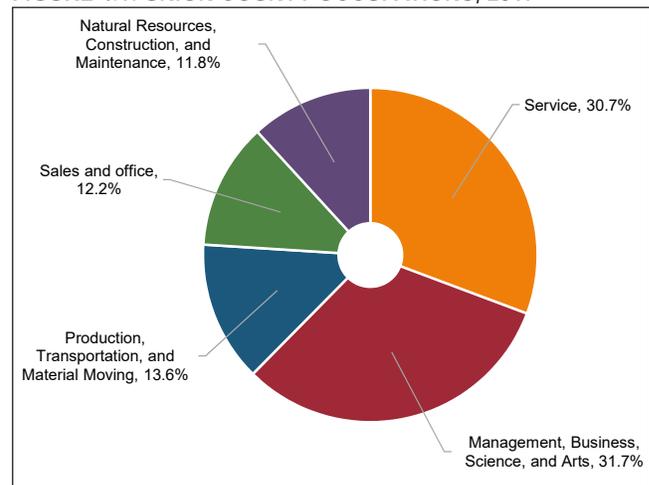
Where occupation is the kind of work a person does to earn a living, industry is the type of activity at a person's place of work. Class of worker categorizes workers in accordance with the type of ownership of the employing organization. This section describes the occupations of Union County workers, the industry in which they are employed, and their class of employment.

The U.S. Census Bureau divides occupations into five categories, including Management, Business, Science, and Arts occupations; Service; Sales and Office; Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance; and Production, Transportation, and Material Moving. In 2017, the category employing

the most Union County workers was Management, Business, Science, and Arts occupations at 31.7% of the workers, followed by Service occupations at 30.7%. Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance employed the smallest share of Union County workers; only 11.8%.

The Production, Transportation, and Material Moving occupations experienced a large increase of 69% since 2010. This increase is attributed to increases in retail sales and warehousing jobs. Service jobs also experienced a large increase of 46% during the same time period. Most of this increase is attributable to the increase in the Public Administration industry associated with the Northeast New Mexico Detention Facility and municipal and county government.

FIGURE 4.1: UNION COUNTY OCCUPATIONS, 2017



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.



Cattle grazing in Union County.

### Industries

The U.S. Census Bureau divides industries into 13 separate categories. In 2017, Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance was far and away the industry employing the majority of Union County workers at 20.7%. However, it represents a smaller portion for Union County than it does for New Mexico as a whole, which employs 25.2% of the working population.

Approximately 18.1% of Union County workers were employed in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining industry and 16.5% in Public Administration. These two industry sectors were significantly higher in Union County than for New Mexico, which employed 4.0% in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining industry and 7.6% in Public Administration. Between 2010 to 2017, Public Administration experienced a strong growth rate of 96.4% and 93.5% in Educational Services, and Health Care and Social Assistance.

### Class of Worker

In 2017, workers in Union County were largely employed in private wage and salary jobs; 67.4%. Government workers represented 27.1% and self-employed workers were 5.5% of the workers in Union County. In comparison, the New Mexico

average for these three classifications was 71.1%, 22.1%, and 6.6%, respectively.

### Unemployment Rates

In January 2019, Union County had a 3.9% unemployment rate, which was lower than the surrounding four counties, and ranked third lowest in New Mexico. Between January 2013 and 2019, Union County unemployment rates decreased by a rate of 22%. The unemployment rate in Union County continued to be significantly lower than the New Mexico average.

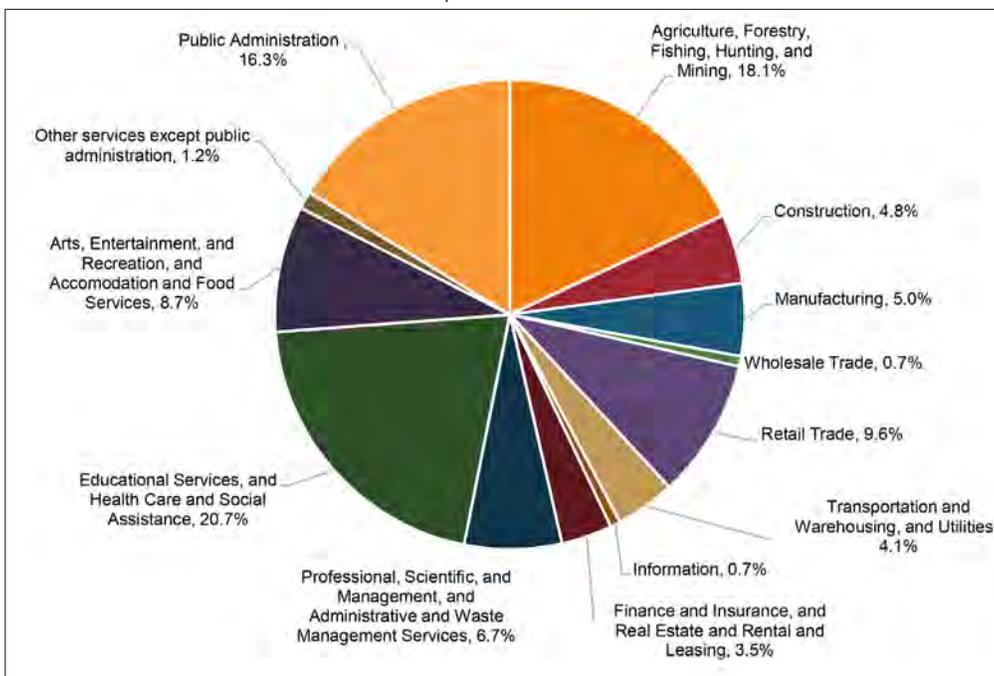
TABLE 4.1: COUNTY UNEMPLOYMENT RATES				
County (2019 Ranking)	Jan. 2013	Jan. 2016	Jan. 2019	% Change
UNION COUNTY (3)	5.0%	4.0%	3.9%	-22.0%
Colfax County (22)	8.2%	6.2%	5.2%	-36.6%
Mora County (6)	13.1%	10.8%	7.4%	-43.5%
Quay County (20)	8.1%	7.4%	5.4%	-33.3%
Harding County (21)	5.8%	7.0%	5.3%	-8.6%
New Mexico	7.3%	6.7%	5.5%	-24.7%

Source: New Mexico Workforce Solutions, LASER.

### Median Household Income

Median household income in Union County ranked highest in 2017 as compared to the surrounding counties. Union County median household income

FIGURE 4.2: UNION COUNTY INDUSTRIES, 2017



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

in 2017 was \$39,975, which was a 4.3% increase from 2010 when the median income was \$38,240 (see Table 4.2). However, Union County’s median household income was considerably lower than the New Mexico average of \$46,718. Colfax, Quay, and Mora counties all experienced a decrease in median household income between 2010 and 2017.

	2010	2017	% Change
UNION COUNTY	\$38,240	\$39,975	4.3%
Harding County	\$33,750	\$35,096	3.8%
Colfax County	\$39,216	\$33,042	-18.7%
Quay County	\$28,773	\$26,663	-7.9%
Mora County	\$37,784	\$26,644	-41.8%
New Mexico	\$34,133	\$46,718	26.9%

Source: American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates, 2013-2017.

### Weekly and Hourly Wages

In 2018, weekly and annual wages in Union County were higher than the four surrounding counties in the region; \$669 and \$34,811, respectively (see Table 4.3). As with median household income, both weekly and annual wages in Union County are far below the New Mexico average, which was \$868 for weekly wages and \$45,140 for annual wages. Quay County and Colfax County registered the lowest wages in the region, with Quay County residents earning \$611 in weekly wages and \$31,769 in annual wages, and Colfax County

residents earning \$616 in weekly wages and \$32,014 in annual wages.

	Weekly	Annual
UNION COUNTY	\$669	\$34,811
Harding County	\$659	\$34,266
Colfax County	\$616	\$32,014
Quay County	\$611	\$31,769
Mora County	\$622	\$32,334
New Mexico	\$868	\$45,140

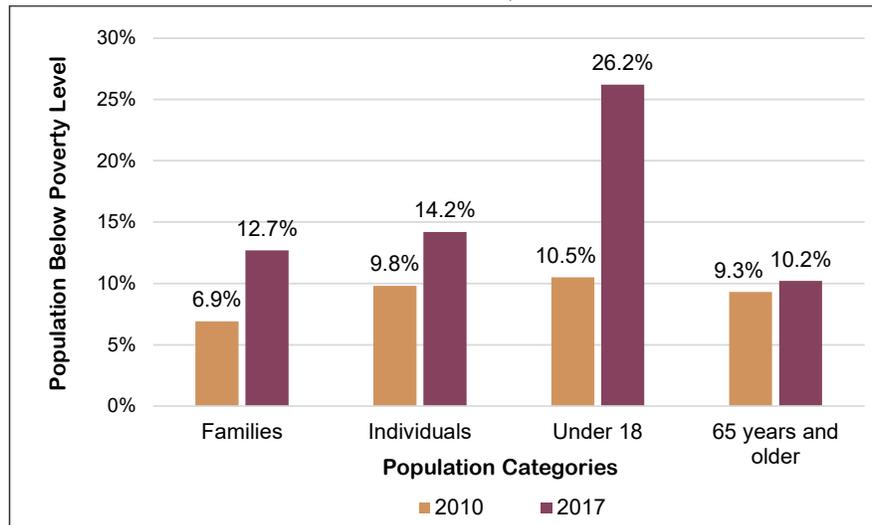
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census of Employment and Wages.

### Poverty Status

Between 2010 and 2017, there was a relatively steep increase in poverty levels in Union County. In 2017, Union County poverty levels rose to 14.2% for individuals and 12.7% for families, representing an 84.1% and 44.1% increase from 2010.

Within the categories of families and individuals, there was a striking increase for Union County youth under 18 years of age living in poverty, which reached 26.2% in 2017, a 149.5% increase. Poverty rates for individuals 65 years and over remained relatively steady, registering at 10.2% in 2017 (see Figure 4.3). Union County’s 2017 poverty rates were lower than the New Mexico average, which was 15.6% for families; 20.6% for individuals; 29.1% for those under 18 years; and 11.9% for those over 65 years.

FIGURE 4.3: UNION COUNTY POVERTY STATUS, 2010-2017



Source: American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates, 2013-2017.

### Taxable Gross Receipts

New Mexico Taxation and Revenue defines taxable gross receipts as the total amount of money or value of other consideration generated by the sale, lease, and licensing of property; granting right to use a franchise; performing services; or selling research and development services performed outside New Mexico, the product of which is initially used in New Mexico.

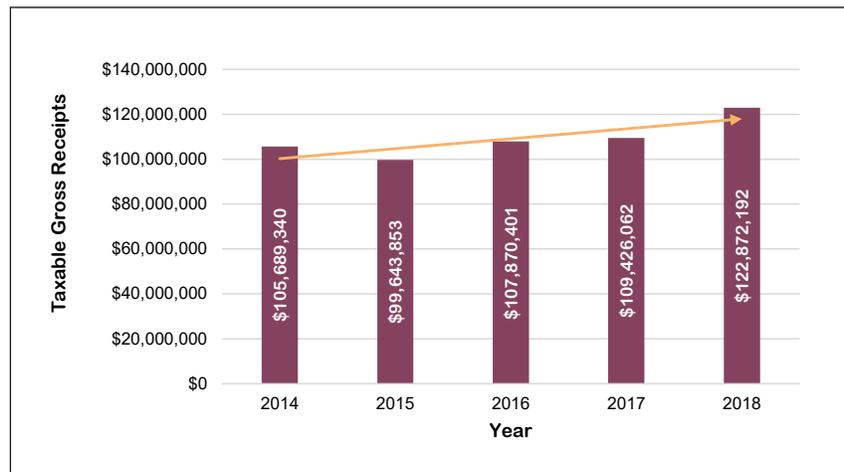
Between 2014 and 2018, there was an upward trend in taxable gross receipts for Union County (see Figure 4.4). In 2014, revenues were \$105,689,340. By 2018, revenues grew by 16% to \$122,872,192. This is much slower growth rate

than New Mexico as a whole, which increased by nearly 44% during the same time period.

### Assessed Property Valuations

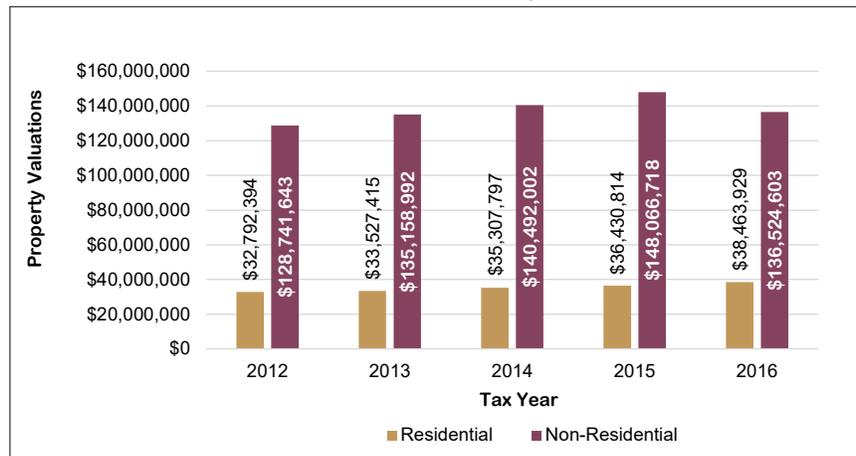
The Union County Assessor’s Office determines the fair market value of a property to ensure the tax burden can be fairly and equitably distributed. Property valuations are categorized by residential and non-residential. Union County residential property valuations increased by 17% between 2012 and 2018 and non-residential property values increased by 6% during the same time period (see Figure 4.5). In contrast, New Mexico residential valuations increased by 9% and commercial valuations by 10% during the same time period.

FIGURE 4.4: TAXABLE GROSS RECEIPTS, 2014-2018



Source: New Mexico Finance Authority, 60 Month Analysis of GRT.

FIGURE 4.5: ASSESSED PROPERTY VALUATIONS, 2012-2016



Source: New Mexico Taxation and Revenue.

### Small Counties Assistance Fund

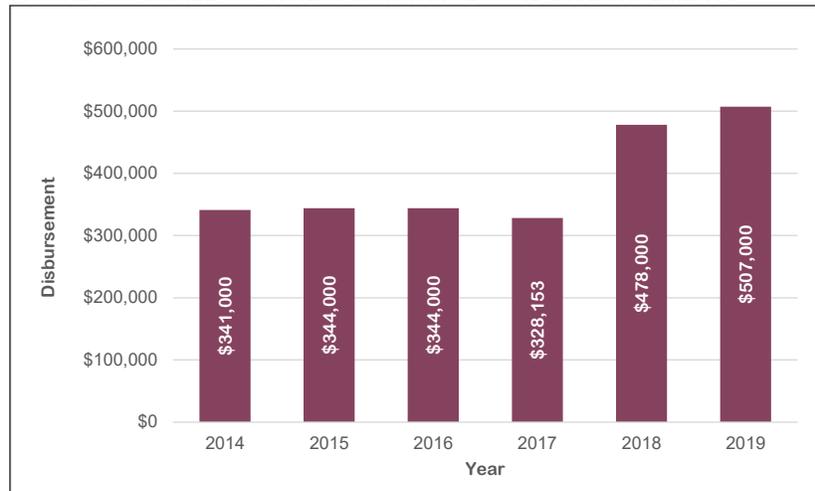
The Small Counties Assistance Fund (NMSA § 4-61-3) is a revenue source available to qualifying counties with populations under 10,000. Disbursements are determined by property tax collection. As such, the disbursement to Union County between 2014 and 2016 stayed between \$341,000 and \$344,000 per year, then dropped to \$328,153 in 2017. Between 2017 and 2019, the disbursement increased by approximately 54.5% to \$507,000.

### Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)

Land owned by the federal government is not subject to taxation by state or local governments.

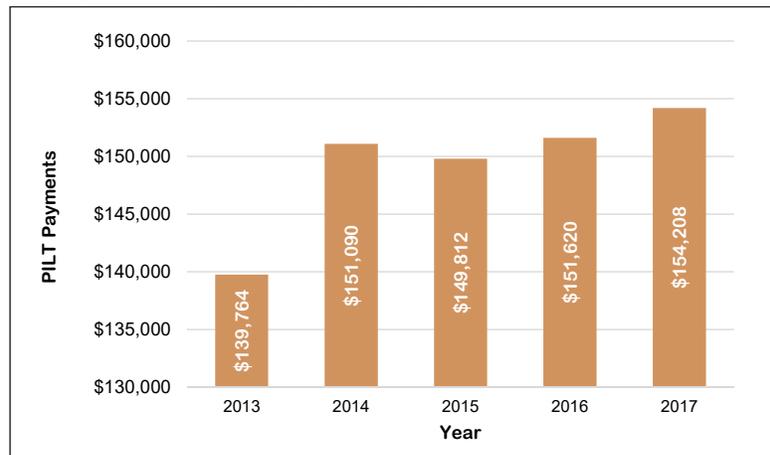
Therefore, the federal government makes a payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) to local governments to help offset losses in property taxes due to nontaxable federal lands within their boundaries. PILT payments help local governments carry out vital services, such as firefighting and police protection, construction of schools and roads, and search and rescue operations. The funding originates at the U.S. Department of the Interior. The payment amount is calculated based on population, the amount of federal land, and shared payments. Since 2013, Union County has received \$594,874 in PILT payments from the federal government.

FIGURE 4.6: SMALL COUNTIES ASSISTANCE FUND DISBURSEMENTS



Source: New Mexico Taxation and Revenue.

FIGURE 4.7: PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES



Source: New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration.

### 4.3 AGRICULTURE

#### Agricultural Profile

Ranching and agriculture is not only an integral component of the custom and culture in Union County, it is the County’s primary industry. This is reinforced by the Community Survey where 64% of the respondents said the rural lifestyle was their favorite aspect about Union County. Of the ranchers or farmers that answered the Community Survey, 52% said that they keep cattle and calves and 38% said they grow or keep a variety of crops and animals.

A profile of Union County’s agricultural industry was derived from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Census of Agriculture, which collects data every five years. Comparisons are made between 2012 and 2017 for Union County.

In 2017, there were 369 farms in Union County. A majority of farms, 60%, were 1,000 or more acres in size (see Figure 4.8), with the average farm size being 5,114 acres. A total of 1,886,887 acres in Union County are for agricultural use; 1% of land (15,404 acres) in farms are irrigated (see Table 4.4).

In 2017, Union County accounted for 3% of New Mexico’s agricultural sales, primarily from cattle and calves. Union County ranked 7th in the state for total market value of agricultural products sold at \$83,134,000 (see Table 4.5), which was

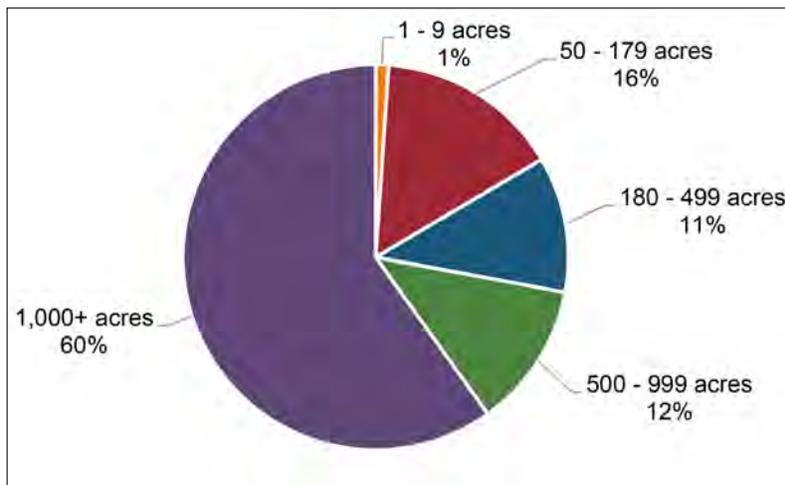
a 15.3% decrease from the 2012 market value of \$98,138,000.

Union County continues to be a strong ranching community. In 2017, sales of cattle and calves totaled \$74,898,000. However, this was a decrease of 7.0% from the 2012 level of \$80,496,000. Large sales numbers correlate with 95% of the land in farms designated as pasture land.

Per farm average sales have fluctuated between 2012 and 2017 (see Table 4.5). In 2017, the net cash income per farm average was \$35,103, which was a significant decrease of 42.7% less than in 2012 when the net cash income average was \$61,227. This correlates with a diminishing market value of products sold. Conversely, Union County farmers have increasingly received more government payments. In 2017, the average payment farmers received was \$28,678, significantly higher than the 2012 average payment of \$16,667. Overall, total net cash income for all farms in Union County was \$12,953,000.

Union County farmers continue to grow crops. Crop sales in 2017 totaled \$8,121,000, a significant decrease of 50.2% since 2012 when crop sales totaled \$16,862,000 (see Table 4.5) The vast majority of the crop operations grew grain, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas. Other operators grew vegetables, melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes or focus on nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod.

FIGURE 4.8: SIZE OF FARMS IN UNION COUNTY, 2017



Source: USDA Census of Agriculture.

TABLE 4.4: UNION COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PROFILE, 2012 - 2017			
	2012	2017	% Change
Number of Farms	353	369	4.5%
Land in Farms (Acres)	1,967,370	1,886,887	-4.1%
Average Size of Farm (Acres)	5,573	5,114	-8.2%
Irrigated Land (Acres)	26,014	15,404	-40.8%
<b>County Total</b>			
Government Payments	\$2,900,000	\$2,896,000	-0.1%
Farm-Related Income	\$2,425,000	\$3,896,000	60.7%
Total Farm Production Expenses	\$81,850,000	\$76,973,000	-6.0%
Net Cash Farm Income	\$21,613,000	\$12,953,000	-40.1%
<b>Per Farm Average</b>			
Market Value of Products Sold	\$278,013	\$225,297	-19.0%
Government Payments Received	\$16,667	\$28,678	72.1%
Farm-Related Income	\$25,797	\$25,461	-1.3%
Total Farm Production Expenses	\$231,871	\$208,600	-10.0%
Net Cash Farm Income	\$61,227	\$35,103	-42.7%

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture, 2012 and 2017.

TABLE 4.5: MARKET VALUE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS SOLD			
Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold	2012	2017	% Change
Total Value of Agricultural Products Sold	\$98,138,000	\$83,134,000	-15.3%
Value of crops, including nursery and greenhouse	\$16,862,000	\$8,121,000	-51.8%
Value of livestock, poultry, and their products	\$81,277,000	\$75,013,000	-7.7%
<b>Value of Sales by Commodity Group</b>			
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, and dry peas	\$14,702,000	\$7,319,000	-50.2%
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes	(D)	(D)	Unknown
Nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod	(D)	-	Unknown
Fruits, tree nuts, berries	-	(D)	Unknown
Other crops and hay	(D)	(D)	Unknown
Poultry and eggs	(D)	(D)	Unknown
Cattle and calves	\$80,496,000	\$74,898,000	-7.0%
Hogs and pigs	(D)	(D)	Unknown
Sheep, goats, wool, mohair, milk	\$21,000	(D)	(D)
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, and donkeys	(D)	(D)	Unknown
Other animals and animal products	\$13,000	-	Unknown

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture. (D) Withheld by USDA to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.

## 4.4 OUTDOOR RECREATION and TOURISM

Union County benefits from having the Capulin Volcano National Monument, Kiowa National Grasslands, and Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways within its boundaries. These areas provide outdoor recreational opportunities for locals and visitors looking for adventure or a quiet nature get-a-way. The following section summarizes the recreational opportunities available in Union County.

### Capulin Volcano National Monument

The Capulin Volcano National Monument is located approximately 60 miles northwest of Clayton along Highway 87 in the Raton-Clayton Volcanic Field. The Raton-Clayton Volcanic Field covers 7,500 square miles, much larger than most other volcanic fields. The area is noted for its size, young age, continental interior setting, and association with one of the few volcanic hot spots in the world. Within the Raton-Clayton Volcanic Field lies the Capulin Volcano, the youngest and easternmost volcano in North America.

Visitors can drive the winding two-mile Volcano Road to the top of the Capulin Volcano, over 1,000 feet from the volcano floor. On a clear day, visitors

can see the five states of New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. There are two nature trails on the top of Capulin. The Crater Rim Trail is a one-mile long trail that roams the rim of the crater. Visitors can view one of the best preserved segments of the Santa Fe Trail from this vantage point. The second trail will take visitors to the vent at the bottom of the crater where visitors can see the inside of the Volcano.

In the summer months, visitors can access five miles of hiking trails, some of which cover the Volcano's ancient lava flows. The National Parks Service offers programs and demonstrations covering a range of topics daily at 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. and by special appointment.



Capulin Volcano.



View of Capulin Volcano National Monument from Folsom.

FIGURE 4.9: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CAPULIN VOLCANO NATIONAL MONUMENT

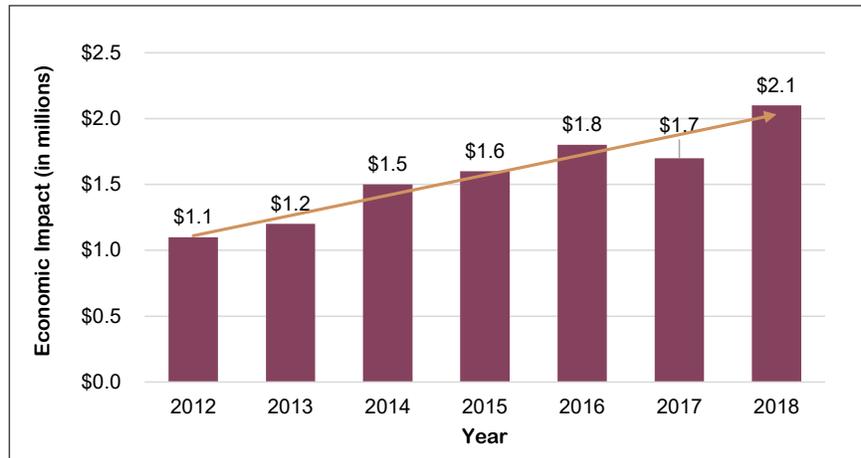
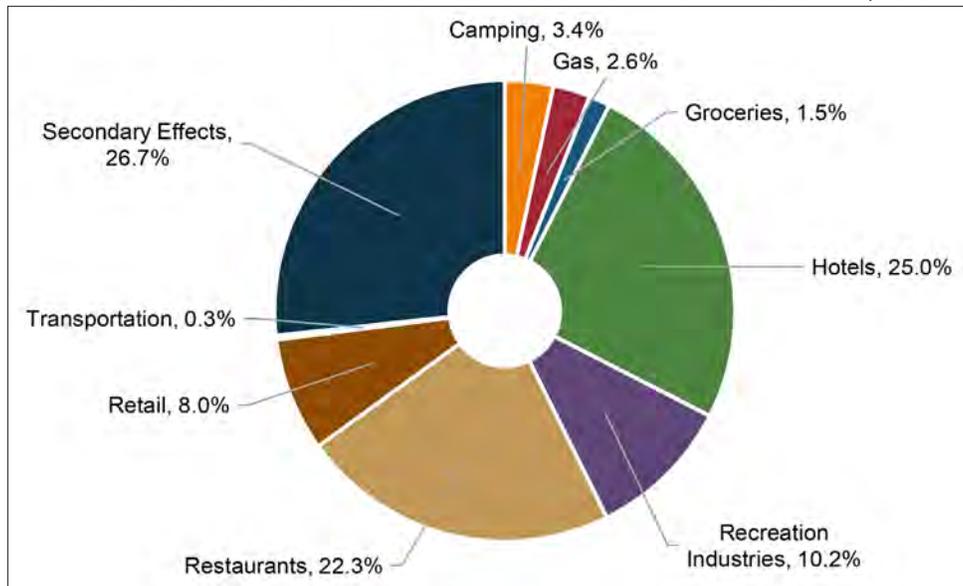


FIGURE 4.10: ECONOMIC OUTPUT OF CAPULIN VOLCANO NATIONAL MONUMENT, 2018



Source: National Parks Service.

**Economic Impact and Economic Output**

The National Parks Service tracks the economic impact of National Parks and Monuments on local gateway economies. According to the *National Park Service Visitor Spending Effects Report*, the economic impact of Capulin Volcano National Monument on the local gateway economy has seen a strong upward trend, steadily increasing from \$1.2 million in 2012 to \$2.1 million in 2018 (see Figure 4.9).

In 2018, 67,410 park visitors spent an estimated \$2,054,000 in local gateway regions while visiting the Capulin Volcano National Monument. These expenditures supported a

total of 29 jobs, \$652,000 in labor income, \$1.1 million in value-added (equal to the difference between the amount an industry sells a product for and the project cost of the product), and \$2.1 million in local gateway economies. The largest share of the economic output, 26.7% (\$552,000), was in Secondary Effects, which is the amount of money paid by tourists to businesses that in turn pays for supplies, wages, and other items used in products or goods. Other major sectors impacted by the Capulin Volcano National Monument included hotels at 25.0% (\$517,000) and restaurants at 22.3% (\$461,000) of the total economic input.

### Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways

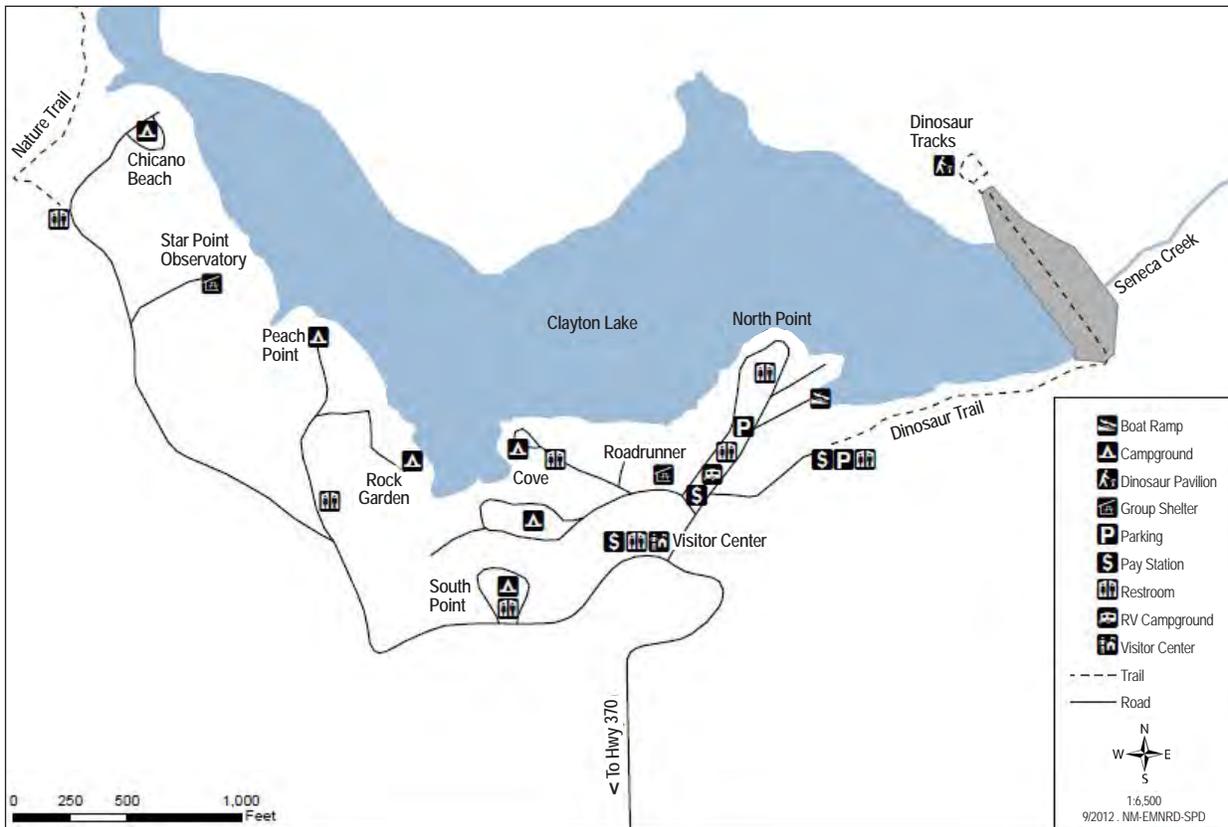
Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways is located 12 miles north of Clayton in the rolling grasslands of northeast Union County. Clayton Lake was a stopover point for travelers on the Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail. Clayton Lake was created by the State Game and Fish Department in 1955 as a fishing lake and winter waterfowl resting area. Several duck species, including mallards, pin tails, and teals frequent Clayton Lake, as do Canadian geese and bald eagles.

Today, visitors to Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways have a variety of activities to choose from, including:

- **Boating** - Motorized and non-motorized boats, canoes, kayaks, and boards are allowed on Clayton Lake. Boats are restricted to trolling speeds.
- **Picnicking** - The Park contains two group picnic shelters, restrooms with vault toilets, and shower facilities.
- **Camping** - There are five campgrounds, 26 developed campsites, seven sites with water, and group campsites.
- **Fishing** - The fishing season at Clayton Lake typically runs from March to October. Fishing is allowed from boats and the banks. Clayton Lake produces walleye, bass, trout, and bluefish.
- **Hiking** - There are short hiking trails in the Park, including the interpretive Dinosaur Trackways. Horses are allowed in primitive areas.



Visitors Center at the Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways.



Map of Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways. Source: New Mexico State Parks.



The Dinosaur Trackways is a popular attraction in Union County. It is one of the most extensive dinosaur trackways in North America. The dinosaur tracks were discovered during excavation of the dam spillway in the 1970s. Silt flowed to uncover one of the best preserved dinosaur track sites in the United States. The track site contains nearly 500 dinosaur tracks from at least eight species that are over 100 million years old. Researchers are currently conducting 3-D research to determine which dinosaurs made these tracks.

A 1/4 mile unpaved trail leads visitors to the Dinosaur Trackways. Once there, a small pavilion provides information about the site and visitors can view the tracks from a wooden raised boardwalk that surrounds the trackway. Interpretative signage is displayed at strategic locations to help visitors identify tracks and locate dinosaur walking paths.



Upper left: Interpretive signage at the Dinosaur Trackways at Clayton Lake; Upper right: Clayton Lake Observatory; Above: A dinosaur track.

### Clayton Lake Observatory

In 2010, Clayton Lake State Park (as it was then named) earned the official designation of International Dark Sky Park by the International Dark Sky Association. This designation is reserved for land that possesses an “exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and a nocturnal environment that is protected for its scientific, natural, educational, cultural heritage, and/or public enjoyment”. New Mexico State Parks staff and volunteers worked closely with Union County and the New Mexico Parks System to apply quality lighting guidelines within the Park and in the surrounding community to protect the quality of night sky.

The Clayton Lake Observatory was erected in 2012 to view the cosmos in the extremely dark sky. It is one of two observatories in New Mexico State

Parks. The observatory is a 12 x 16-foot building with a retractable roof that houses a 12-inch, solar powered, computer operated telescope and remote television monitor for group viewing. Stargazing parties are held at the observatory regularly through volunteer assistance. Private groups can reserve the space for events.

### Stephen M. Bush Memorial Shooting Range

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish is developing a shooting range just outside of Clayton in Union County. The shooting range will sit on 161.5 acre parcel that was donated to the Department. Phase 1 of the project will encompass approximately half the total area and will include a 50-yard pistol range; a 50-yard small bore rifle range; a 200-yard rifle range; a 80-yard archery

range; and a multi-purpose shotgun field. Future phases will add a skeet and trap shooting. The shooting range will be managed by New Mexico Game and Fish Department. This is the only shooting range of its kind in Union County and is expected to draw visitors to the area.

### Kiowa National Grasslands

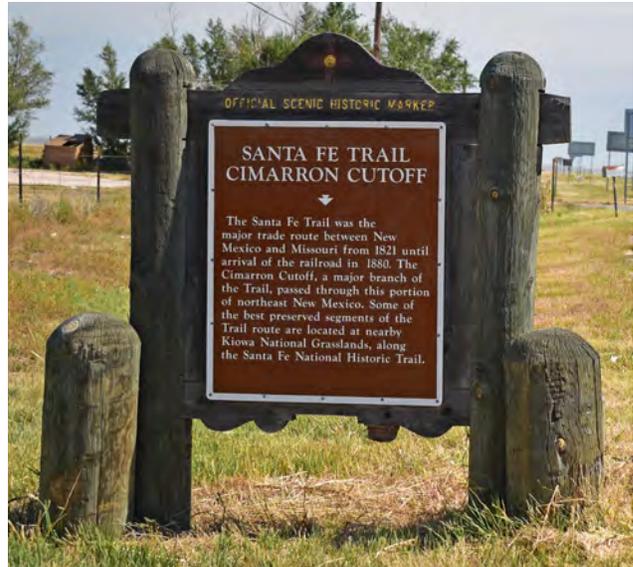
The Kiowa National Grasslands is administered by the Cibola National Forest. The Grasslands are comprised of 136,505 acres (approximately 58,000 acres in Union County alone) and stretch from the northeast corner of New Mexico to Roy, Springer, and Clayton. US 56 travels across the Kiowa National Grasslands to the beautiful Mills Canyon along the Canadian River. The area is admired for its wildlife viewing, and geologic and landscape diversity. North of Clayton lies a 2-mile section of the original Santa Fe Trail Cimarron Route. The area has two campgrounds, but dispersed camping is possible.

### Santa Fe Trail National Scenic Byway

The Santa Fe Trail, an important trade route that connected the Missouri River to the Provincial Capital of Santa Fe (then part of the Republic of Mexico) to eastern traders. The Cimarron Cutoff, a major branch of the Santa Fe Trail, passes through Union County and is one of its most well-preserved stretches. The Santa Fe Trail played a major role in transporting goods and people across the plains from 1821 until the arrival of the railroad in 1880. Travelers along the Santa Fe Trail used horse covered wagons to transport goods along the trail that followed those used by Native Americans.

Today, travelers can follow the trail as it enters New Mexico from Highway 406 out of Oklahoma and travels north out of Clayton past Rabbit Ears Mountain. The Santa Fe Trail then travels west along Highway 56 towards the Raton Pass near Colorado. Points of interest along the Santa Fe Trail in Union County include:

- **McNees Crossing of Corrupa Creek:** This landmark is located 3.5 miles west of Oklahoma state line and 1.5 miles south on Highway 406. This rock crossing is still visible and retains much of its original appearance. The crossing was used as a campground and



*Santa Fe Trail Cimarron Cutoff Historic Marker.*

resting area for traders and scouts.

- **Rabbit Ears Mountain:** Rabbit Ears Mountain is an important landmark along the historic Santa Fe Trail. It provided early traders entering New Mexico and traveling the Santa Fe Trail with a landmark and direction point.
- **Rabbit Ears Creek Camp:** Rabbit Ears Creek Camp is currently located on private land. Historically, the campground was considered an excellent place to camp and rest for travelers on the Santa Fe Trail as it was close to spring water, wood, and game for food. The Rabbit Ears Mountain is visible from the campground.

### Mandala Center

The Mandala Center is located in Des Moines. It sits on the slope of the Sierra Grande Mountain with views of the Capulin Volcano and the grasslands. The Mandala Center offers a variety of workshops focusing on spiritual growth, personal and professional development, health and wellness, and creative expression. Rental space is available for group events. The Mandala Center offers accommodations for 24 people in double occupancy rooms in several lodges across the site. Visitors can enjoy a large labyrinth and the historic Chapel of San Lorenzo.



Mandala Center.

### Folsom Village

Folsom Village is located at the junction of County Roads 456, 72, and 325 in west central Union County. A trip to Folsom provides visitors with an experience of the rich history of Union County.

In 1967, the Folsom Museum opened in the Doherty Mercantile Building. The Museum’s mission is to preserve and display local artifacts and record pioneer history. The Museum receives between 2,000 to 3,000 visitors per year and regularly hosts events to assist with preservation and restoration projects.

New Mexico MainStreet recently approved a Frontier Initiative Project that will focus on the restoration of the Doherty Mercantile building. Additionally, Folsom Village is seeking assistance with bicycle and pedestrian enhancements; developing a downtown revitalization plan and historic building survey; and façade, awning, and business sign improvements. This project will receive professional and technical assistance from New Mexico MainStreet and will be completed within 12-18 months.



Folsom Museum.

### Folsom Man Archaeological Site

The Folsom Man Archaeological Site is one of the most important archaeological sites in North America. After the flood of 1908, George McJunkin discovered a cache of fossilized Bison bones protruding from a new arroyo. This find was not investigated until four years after his death. Subsequent digs and carbon dating at the Folsom Site were performed. The discovery revealed that humans were in North America nearly 7,000 years prior to the time previously believed.

The Folsom Man Site contains 32 Bison antiquus skeletons with 26 spear points known as “Folsom Points” embedded in the bison skeletons. Folsom Points were generally 3 to 5 inches in length, with a long flute on each side. The Folsom Man Site is only open to the public a few times each year. All tours are operated by the New Mexico State Land Office and start at the Folsom Museum.



Folsom Man Archaeological Site.

## 4.5 ECONOMIC ASSETS and RESOURCES

Union County’s strengths are evident through several economic development resources available at the local, regional, and national levels. This section provides a brief description of each resource.

### Local Economic Development Act (LEDA)

In 2005, Union County adopted a Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) as part of the “Economic Development Plan Ordinance” (Ordinance No. 30). The purpose of the Economic Development Plan is to allow public support of economic projects that

promote and enhance local economic development efforts while protecting the unauthorized use of public money and resources. It also allows Union County to enter into joint powers agreements with other local governments to plan and support regional economic development projects.

The current Economic Development Plan authorizes the Union County Administrator, identified as the Union County Community Development Corporation (UCCDC), with approval from the Union County Commission, to assist economic development projects with public land, buildings, and infrastructure that it already owns, or it may build, purchase, or lease the facilities for an economic development project. Union County can also bear the full cost, waive applicable fees, or it can contribute to payments for professional services associated with a proposed development. The UCCDC will review and make recommendations to the County Commission regarding applications for assistance and industrial revenue bonds (IRB). Unfortunately, it does not appear that the UCCDC currently has the capacity to assist Union County in this endeavor.

The Economic Development Plan identified the following economic development projects as priorities for receiving assistance:

- Manufacturing firms;
- Projects which enhance the exporting capacity of goods and services, which currently have to be imported into Union County;
- Private companies seeking to build, expand, or relocate facilities;
- Private companies which provide facilities or services which enhance the ability of Union County business to operate;
- Organizations which assist business start-ups or bring small companies together to increase competitive abilities such as business incubators; art incubators or coalitions; public markets for farmers, gardeners, crafts, etc.; and organizations that promote workforce development, such as apprentices or job training; and

- Qualifying entities with existing contract projects may propose restructuring as an economic development project.

All economic development projects are required to provide a cost-benefit analysis showing that Union County will recoup the value of its donation within a period of 10 years. Projects requesting assistance must go through the same review as the Industrial Revenue Bond applications, which focuses on environmental and community impacts of proposed projects. Applicants are required to demonstrate how the project will provide benefits to the community, such as providing components and production capabilities; enhancing targeted industry clusters; or addressing critical deficiencies in the regional economy. Applicants are also required to demonstrate how the qualifying entity is making a substantive contribution to the County, such as money; in-kind services; jobs; expanded tax base; or property that provides service or value for the expansion or improvement of the economy.

Ideally, a LEDA/Economic Development Plan Ordinance should be reviewed and updated every five years to ensure it reflects the current needs of the community. As a follow-up to the Comprehensive Plan, Union County should work on an update to the Ordinance to reflect current priorities. The New Mexico Economic Development Department's Region 4 Representative could be enlisted to assist Union County in the update.

### Clayton-Union County Chamber of Commerce

The Clayton-Union County Chamber of Commerce is a 501(c)6 non-profit organization



based in Clayton. The Chamber is comprised of business owners, professionals, industrial firms, and community members that are interested in the economic well being of Union County and Clayton. The Chamber is an active community resource that promotes businesses through its social media and website and is a co-sponsor of many community events. Some of the Chamber sponsored events include the Clayton Lake Trout Derby; Union County Fair; Top Gun Golf Tournament; and the Annual 4th of July Celebration.

### Eastern Plains Council of Governments

The Eastern Plains Council of Governments (EPCOG) provides assistance to the counties of Union, Curry, Roosevelt, Quay, Harding, De Baca, and Guadalupe with Community Development Block Grants, capital outlay requests and award assistance, and Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) planning. EPCOG works closely with local governments by facilitating workshops, meetings, and discussions on economic development issues. EPCOG works to ensure the region's interests are being recognized by the State Legislature. The U.S. Congressional delegation also works with local governments to manage capital outlay projects to make sure they are proceeding in a timely and accountable manner.

EPCOG recognized the need for comprehensive planning in rural communities and completed the Union County Comprehensive Plan in 2002. EPCOG also created the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Eastern Plains in 2017.

### USDA Rural Development

USDA Rural Development is a major source for loans and grants to support rural businesses; single family housing purchases and repairs; improvements to community facilities; water and waste disposal; expansion of electric transmission and distribution lines; value-added producers; and expansion of Internet access to rural areas. The USDA Rural Development Field Office in Las Vegas is located at 1927-A, N. 7th Street and serves Union, Colfax, Guadalupe, Harding, Mora, Quay, and San Miguel counties. Each of these programs have specific requirements. For more information on these programs and eligibility, see Appendix C: Funding Resources.

### Ports-to-Plains Corridor

Seeing the need to expand economic development along Highways US 87/287 near Lubbock, Texas, a group of elective officials, civic, leaders, and chambers of commerce from nine states, Mexico, and Canada developed the north/south corridor of Port-to-Plains to advance trade via an international transportation network. The Ports-to-Plains Corridor is approximately 2,300 miles and serves a 4,950 miles region from Mazatlan, Sinoloa, Mexico

to Northern Alberta Province in Canada. The Corridor runs through oil and agricultural producing regions that historically have had limited access to distribution and transportation networks.

The New Mexico spur of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor runs through Union County along US 87/64 through Clayton and on to Raton, making a connection to Interstate 25. In 2012, this highway was the first to expand from a 2-lane to 4-lane road under the Ports-to-Plains designation. Since the official designation of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, the area has seen an increase in travelers and freight vehicles carrying agricultural and energy products.

Most of the economic development along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor has occurred in Clayton. Union County should further economic development in other areas by supporting highway commercial along US 87/64, particularly near Glenville and Des Moines. This could include travel centers, restaurants, gas stations, and lodging.

### Northeast New Mexico Detention Facility

The largest employer in Union County is the Northeast New Mexico Detention Facility. The facility is owned by and located in the Town of Clayton on Dr. Michael Jenkins Road. The facility opened in 2008 as a Level III Medium Security facility housing male inmates. The Detention Facility's inmate capacity is 625.

In 2019, the New Mexico State Department of Corrections assumed management of the facility from GEO Group, a private prison operator. The prison is currently operated through an intergovernmental agreement between the Town of Clayton and the State of New Mexico. There are approximately 150 staff at the Detention Facility, including administration, correction officers, and support staff. Finding and retaining staff at the Detention Facility has been challenging. Wages and benefits are anticipated to increase under management of the Detention Facility by the State of New Mexico.

## 4.6 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

### Hemp Farming and Processing

Ranching and farming will continue to play a leading role in the Union County economy. As the agricultural market expands to incorporate new trends, Union County has the opportunity to become a regional leader in new agricultural products.

With the passing of the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill) by the United States Congress, hemp is now a legal agricultural commodity that can be grown and manufactured across the nation. This poses an excellent opportunity for Union County to leverage land and farming assets and capitalize on the economic power of industrial hemp.

Hemp is a versatile crop that can be grown as fiber, seed, or as a dual-purpose crop. Hemp is used in furniture, textiles, food, paper, beverages, beauty products, automotive products, pharmaceuticals, and construction supplies. The “Hemp as an Agricultural Commodity” report (Congressional Research Service, 2018) stated that sales of hemp products in 2016 was estimated to be \$700 million. In 2016, hemp was only allowed to be grown by research institutions and under strict federal regulations as hemp was still considered a Schedule 1 drug by the Drug Enforcement Agency. Federal decriminalization and regulatory framework

imposed at the state level will surely grow the economic potential of hemp throughout the United States, including Union County.

### 2018 Farm Bill on Hemp

The Farm Bill federally recognized hemp as an agricultural commodity that can be cultivated, possessed, sold, and distributed. To assist in regulation, the bill defined hemp as a Cannabis Sativa plant with a delta-9 -tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) concentration of no more than .3% by dry body weight. The bill delegated the responsibility of regulation to states and Indian tribes. Each state or Indian Tribe will be required to submit hemp production plans to the USDA for approval with the goal of all hemp production being regulated by the 2020 planting season.

### Hemp Farming

Union County has an opportunity to grow its agricultural economy through hemp, as the industrial hemp market is beginning to flourish across the United States. Hemp is a very sustainable and non-demanding plant. It is a non-water intensive plant and it does not require excessive fertilizer during its growth season. It is a strong plant that does not require herbicides or pesticides to grow on an industrial scale. Hemp is an ideal plant for Union County farmers that are focused on future water usage and sustainable land practices.



Industrial hemp farm.

### Local Implementation

As the USDA works to establish regulatory guidelines, counties are responsible for regulating farmers within their jurisdiction. Key aspects of county-wide regulation involve:

- **Permitting** - The requirement that all hemp growers in the county apply for permission to grow or manufacture hemp. The benefits of permitting allow for regulation on the number of acres allowed to be in production; identify the location of hemp producing farms; contact information for growers, etc.
- **Inspections and Sampling** - Ensure proper powers are given to county personnel to verify compliance with requirements; and to include a pathway for testing the levels of THC.
- **Enforcement** - A system for violations and destruction of crops that are not in compliance with federal, state, or county regulations.

It is in Union County's best interest to establish an ordinance that establishes the rules and procedures for hemp farmers within Union County. For example, Otero County adopted the "Otero County Hemp Production Ordinance" in July 2019. The objective of the ordinance was to establish rules prohibiting the use of non-feminized hemp seeds or hemp plants to support and sustain the growth of hemp as an essential agricultural product.

The versatility of industrial hemp makes the crop a viable form of investment, provided there are production facilities that can purchase the raw hemp for processing and extracting. A partnership with the Town of Clayton to recruit a hemp production facility to the Clayton Business Park would be beneficial to both Union County and the Town of Clayton. The access to locally-farmed products provides an efficient supply chain and is an enticing incentive for any producer.

### Hops

The artisanal and craft beer business is booming. According to the United States Brewers Association, craft beer sales volume growth was up 3.9% in 2018, reaching \$27.6 billion and accounting



*Hops grown by Santa Fe Brewing.*

for more than 24% of the total \$114.2 billion beer market in the United States.

Brewers add hops to give beer a nuanced flavor, modify flavors, and act as a preservative. Hops have traditionally been a key ingredient in beer recipes. In recent years, hops have moved from being a supporting ingredient to being the key feature of many craft beer recipes. Imperial beer recipes add double the hops for a big beer flavor. There is a large variety of hops currently available with new ones being developed and added to the market.

Hops can be a lucrative market, especially as craft brewers are interested in using unique and often locally-produced hops in their beers. The *Humulus lupulus* variety of *Neomexicanus* subspecies of hops has always grown wild in New Mexico. In the 1990s, the *Neomexicanus* was bred into a family of brewing-hop varieties. Until recently, hops were grown by brewers. Smaller farmers are now looking to grow hops to sell as a stand-alone product to local and national brewers.

### Renewable Energy

New Mexico's geography, sunlight, and wind across wide open plains make it an excellent location for renewable energy generation. The New Mexico State House passed the Energy Transition Act (Senate Bill 489-44-22) requiring the state to

generate 100% of its electricity from carbon-free resources by 2045. Union County should add to this momentum and focus on drawing renewable energy development to the County.

### **Wind Energy**

Wind energy has become the fastest growing source of electricity in the United States. The abundance of available land in Union County makes it an ideal location for wind turbines. Wind farms generate many jobs during construction and retain operators and technicians after the turbines are operational. Wind turbines can be installed in cattle grazing areas with little impact. Landowners can also lease land to power companies or landowners can pool resources to create cooperative wind projects. Smaller wind energy systems can also be installed to provide energy to individual farms and ranches.

In 2014, the State Land Office approved plans for the Triangle Gallegos Wind Farm to be constructed on 19,000 acres of State Trust Land and 31,000 acres of private land west of Clayton and south of Grenville. This wind farm was delayed pending connection to a transmission line.

In December 2019, PNE USA won a bid to develop a wind farm on 7,636 acres of State Land in Union and Colfax counties near Gladstone. The Gladstone Wind Project is expected to generate approximately 31 megawatts from eleven turbines, enough to power approximately 6,200 homes, and \$8 million in state revenue during the lease.

Union County residents can train for wind turbine installation through the Wind Energy Technology Program at Mesalands Community College in Tatum. The North American Wind Research and Training Center provides students with the opportunity to perform actual maintenance and repair on the College's General Electric 1.5-megawatt ESS turbine. Students can choose from three courses of study, including an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Wind Energy Technology; Applied Science Certificate; or an Occupational Certificate.

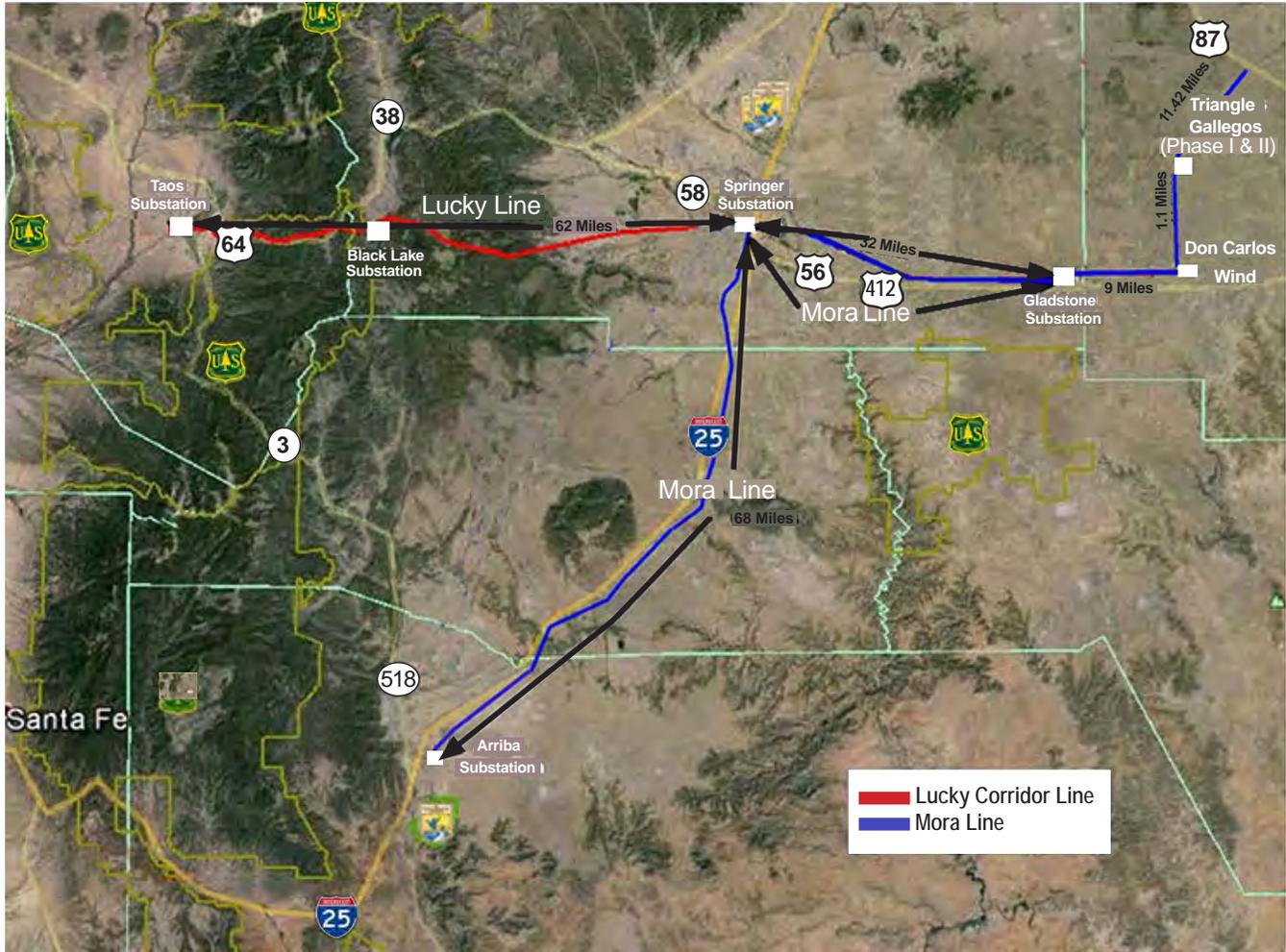
In addition to Mesalands Community College, Clovis Community College provides another option for wind energy training with its Industrial Technology Program. This program prepares graduates with the training to operate and maintain industrial equipment in production plants, wind farms, and power generation.

### **Energy Transmission**

Lucky Corridor, LLC. is planning two separate projects, including the Mora and the Lucky Corridor Transmission Lines (*see Lucky Corridor and Mora Transmission Lines map, next page*). Both of these transmission projects, along with the Triangle Gallegos Wind Farm, will help Union County advance renewable energy projects and provide workers with new job opportunities, as well as internships and job training.

The 115-kV Mora Line will connect the Union County wind energy generated from the Triangle Gallegos Wind Farm with the existing PNM 345-kV Arriba substation near Las Vegas, New Mexico. It will have a transfer capacity of 180 MW, with an estimated commercial opening date in September 2020. The Mora Line will trigger more than \$15m of network upgrades to neighboring systems to prepare to receive the electricity, and embedded capex for development costs.

According to an article in TransmissionHub (Corina Rivera-Linares, 6/7/2018), Lucky Corridor, LLC. was granted final approval by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in 2018 to proceed with the Transmission Construction and Interconnection Agreement with the Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM). The New Mexico Economic Development Department prepared a report - "Economic Impact of the Lucky Corridor Project on Communities in Northern New Mexico" (2016) - that estimated the project would generate up to 3,200 direct, indirect, and induced jobs in the area during the construction period and 137 jobs annually during the operating years. The 345-kV Lucky Corridor Line will connect from the Springer substation to the Taos substation. It has an estimated cost of \$131.1m, a transfer capacity of at least 700 MW, and an anticipated commercial operating date in July 2023.



Future Lucky Corridor and Mora Transmission Lines. Source: Lucky Corridor, LLC. website.

**Biofuels**

Agricultural output from Union County could support a production plant that would transform plants into a biofuel. Ethanol is a renewable fuel primarily made from plants containing sugar. Corn is the most common crop used for ethanol, but other crops can also be used, such as switchgrass, hemp, and oilseed crops. Almost all gasoline in the United States contains some blend of ethanol. The State of New Mexico mandates that all diesel fuel be 5% biodiesel blend. That mandate was waived for several years because there were few blending operations. Currently, New Mexico has one ethanol production station in Portales. There is potential for Union County and the Town of Clayton to partner to develop a biofuels production plant at the Clayton Business Park.

The eXtension Farm Energy website, maintained by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, provides practical information for improving energy efficiency and reducing energy costs on farms. A wide range of topics are covered, including energy efficiency and conservation in agriculture, feedstocks and energy crops, biofuel conversion processes, and solar and wind energy on farm and ranch land.

**Freight**

A major economic strength of Union County is its location as a transportation corridor for truck and rail traffic between Texas and Colorado. The designation of the Ports-to-Plains Highway has increased truck traffic through Union County, and is anticipated to increase over time. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Powder River Basin Corridor travels a similar route as Highway 87/64

from west Texas to Colorado and is an active rail line with a run through Clayton and Des Moines.

These important freight corridors provide Union County with the opportunity to advance economic development through new gas stations, restaurants, hotels/motels, RV parks, and truck stops. Areas for this type of development should be located along highways with access for travelers. The Clayton Business Park is located close to the Port of Entry and could easily accommodate a truck stop or other types of large commercial or industrial development.

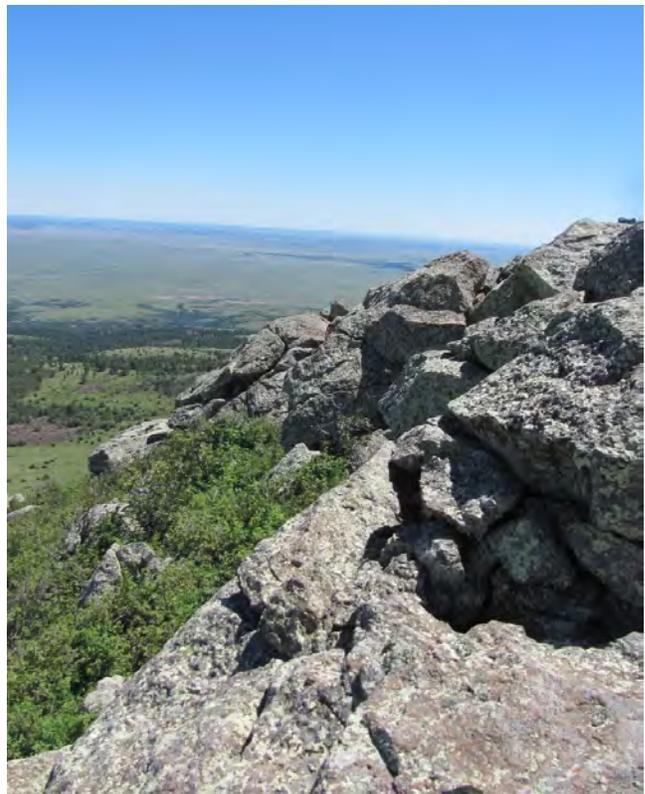
There are other areas within unincorporated Union County that would be appropriate for future industrial development and transportation of raw materials and finished goods. These areas are in proximity to Clayton, Des Moines, and Grenville with connections to the railroad and the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

Creating a Freight Master Plan would assist Union County in organizing and planning for the future of freight transportation. This would include identifying roads, rail crossings, and bridges in need of improvement, creating a transportation hub, and creating strategies to grow freight businesses in Union County.

### Outdoor Recreation

Union County has an abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities that should be marketed to visitors and increase spending in the area. Residents of New Mexico are strong consumers of outdoor recreation. Estimates from the Outdoor Industry Association indicate that over 65% of New Mexicans participate in outdoor recreation activities each year. Outdoor recreation consumers in New Mexico spend \$9.9 billion dollars annually; contributing to 99,000 jobs and over \$2.8 million in wages and salaries; and generating \$623 million in state and local tax revenue.

Union County has the added advantage of being along US 64/87. Travelers seeking outdoor recreation experiences drive from Texas to ski resorts in northern New Mexico and Colorado. Effective marketing and branding that features the outdoor recreation assets and destinations in



*Sierra Grande located on State Trust Lands near Des Moines in the Raton-Clayton Volcanic Field.*

Union County should be developed as a method of increasing this economic sector.

The Future Land Use Scenario (see *Chapter 3: Land Use*) designates three travel loops that would direct travelers to the premiere outdoor recreational areas in Union County. The Volcanic Loop, Dinosaur Trackway Road, and Recreational Loop lead travelers to Capulin National Monument and Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways, and smaller communities, such as Folsom, Capulin, and Des Moines. These routes should incorporate clear, informative, and attractive signage to draw visitors to these areas. Consideration should be given to enhancing the capacity of the travel loops to include multi-modal trails or lanes. The Future Land Use Scenario also incorporates new areas for commercial, hospitality, and RV Parks to support additional visitors.

### Agri-Tourism

Agri-tourism links agricultural activities with tourism to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural-related businesses. These tourist enterprises often engage visitors in farm and

ranch activities for recreation and are conducted on private agricultural lands to generate income for the owner. Agri-tourism provides unique and engaging experiences where visitors can enjoy the rural setting and develop a greater understanding of farm and ranch life. According to the US Census of Agriculture, in 2017, the average per farm value for agri-tourism was \$33,222,000, which was an increase of 36% from 2012.

Examples of agri-tourism include:

- Horseback riding;
- Wildlife viewing and photography;
- Camping / picnicking;
- Children’s educational day camps;
- Hayrides and tractor rides;
- Day camps;
- Petting farms;
- Food preparation using traditional appliances;
- Garden tours with “U Pick” operations;
- Vegetable preservation;
- Hands on crop planting;
- Harvest production;
- Living history farms;
- Working animal ranches; and
- Rural accommodations.

Agri-tourism events include harvest festivals; wildlife festivals; rural weddings; farmers’ markets; concerts; and special events. Agri-tourism presents an unique opportunity to combine the rich heritage and culture of Union County farmers and ranchers to tourism while providing educational and social benefits to the visitors. Agri-tourism gives the farm or ranch owner the opportunity to market directly to visitors and the owner/operator can dictate the scale of the undertaking. Often farmers and ranchers offer seasonal visits or host one special annual event. Combining marketing of agri-tourism with outdoor recreation and Union County community events will help draw visitors to Union County for multiple experiences.

## 4.7 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & STRATEGIES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 1

**Pursue economic development initiatives to expand existing businesses, attract new well-paying jobs and business opportunities, and facilitate small business development.**

#### **Objectives:**

- *To diversify the economy and expand business and employment opportunities for Union County residents.*
- *To highlight the existing unmet demand for commercial services in Union County.*
- *To target job creation for Union County youth.*

#### **Economic Development Strategy 1.1**

Update the Union County Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) ordinance to reflect current priorities and identify targeted business clusters for establishment or expansion in Union County. The LEDA should include, but not be limited to:

- Setting clear goals and strategies that can assist Union County in developing a roadmap for future economic development;
- Appointing or convening an Economic Development Administrator or Committee that is charged with advising Union County on economic development decisions and potential LEDA projects;
- Identifying targeted industries and/or industry clusters that would benefit Union County and help focus the County’s economic development recruitment efforts and land use priorities;
- Encouraging projects that utilize locally grown agricultural products; renewable energy and transmission; tourism support services and facilities; food manufacturing; value-added agriculture; warehousing and distribution; trucking; etc.;
- Employing a cost/benefit analysis that illustrates the impact of the project on Union County and the recoup time for Union County’s investment; and

- Imposing clawback provisions that provide Union County with the ability to recoup public investment in projects that do not meet job creation requirements.

#### **Economic Development Strategy 1.2**

Identify and recruit businesses related and complementary to existing and targeted business clusters, including renewable energy and energy transmission; tourism support services and facilities; food manufacturing; value-added agriculture; greenhouses; warehousing and distribution; and trucking.

#### **Economic Development Strategy 1.3**

Work with the New Mexico Economic Development Department, local municipalities, and employers on seeking workforce investment funding.

#### **Economic Development Strategy 1.4**

In conjunction with the Town of Clayton, complete a study that identifies the components of the “Rabbit Ears Small Business Incubator”, utilizing locally grown, created, or manufactured products and services. Determine the interest of Union County residents in participating in the business incubator.

#### **Economic Development Strategy 1.5**

Work with local banks and regional economic development organizations to offer access to capital to small businesses through a revolving-loan fund.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 2:**

#### **Maintain the economic vitality and viability of agriculture and ranching in Union County.**

##### **Objectives:**

- *To identify new outlets for agricultural products grown or raised in Union County.*
- *To ensure state lands in Union County continue to be available for grazing.*
- *To preserve the traditional custom and culture of Union County.*

#### **Economic Development Strategy 2.1**

Work with the NMSU Union County Extension Office, New Mexico Department of Agriculture, and local farmers on advancing the technical knowledge of hemp farming and production in Union County.

**Economic Development Strategy 2.2** Develop a recruitment strategy for a hemp processing company to locate at the Clayton Business Park. Provide information on available tax incentives; LEDA funds; USDA Rural Development Funds; Job Training Incentive Program funds; and the available workforce.

#### **Economic Development Strategy 2.3**

Identify Union County farmers that would be interested in farming hops and New Mexico brewers that would utilize the crops.

#### **Economic Development Strategy 2.4**

Determine the interest of Union County farmers in growing crops for a biofuel processing plant.

**Economic Development Strategy 2.5** Utilize the technical expertise of the New Mexico Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program and NMSU's Clayton Livestock Research Center on best practices in agricultural and rangeland management.

### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3**

#### **Promote and increase tourism to points of interest throughout Union County.**

##### **Objectives:**

- *To facilitate Union County becoming a regional destination for outdoor recreation tourism.*
- *To maximize exposure to targeted markets in New Mexico and the states of Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma.*
- *To capture more tourism dollars from visitors to the Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways, Clayton Lake Observatory, Capulin Volcano National Monument, Santa Fe Trail National Scenic Byway and Historic Trail, Stephen M. Bush Memorial Shooting Range, and other regional attractions.*

#### **Economic Development Strategy 3.1**

Recruit the development of additional lodging and hospitality facilities in the areas around Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways and Capulin Volcano National Monument, as shown in the Future Land Use Scenario.

**Economic Development Strategy 3.2**

In collaboration with the Clayton/Union County Chamber of Commerce, New Mexico State Parks, and the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Department, create a targeted tourism marketing campaign that promotes Union County as the Northeast New Mexico destination for outdoor recreation opportunities, and cultural and historic attractions. Utilize social media, print media, and television to promote Union County.

**Economic Development Strategy 3.3**

Co-sponsor community events with the Town of Clayton, Village of Des Moines, and Village of Folsom that highlight the unique attributes of the region.

**Economic Development Strategy 3.4**

Recruit new businesses that support the tourism industry, including gas stations, restaurants, rest stops, hotels/motels, and recreation equipment to locate within Union County.

**Economic Development Strategy 3.5**

Support Folsom Village on applying for economic development funding and technical support from New Mexico MainStreet.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4**

**Expand access to workforce training that leads to new, high quality jobs in Union County.**

**Objectives:**

- *To link state and federal employment and training program services to business attraction and retention initiatives.*
- *To work with Luna Community College (in Las Vegas), Clovis Community College (in Clovis), and Mesalands Community College (in Tucumcari) on expanding training programs to meet the needs of existing and future employers and industries.*
- *To achieve higher levels of employability and job readiness for students.*

**Economic Development Strategy 4.1**

In coordination with the Town of Clayton, public school districts, and regional post secondary educational institutions, determine the feasibility of a locating a satellite community college in Union County that provides training for jobs in

renewable energy, value-added agriculture, healthcare, and building trades.

**Economic Development Strategy 4.2**

Provide information to Union County residents on the available online education courses from Mesalands Community College, Luna Community College, and Clovis Community College.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5**

**Promote Clayton Business Park as the local and regional community's primary commercial and industrial center.**

**Objectives:**

- *To expand value-added agriculture and manufacturing of agricultural products grown in Union County.*
- *To become a viable business hub on the Ports to Plains Corridor (US Highway 87) through New Mexico.*
- *To partner with the Town of Clayton, Clayton Union County Chamber of Commerce, and the New Mexico Economic Development Department on generating new industry and jobs for Union County residents.*
- *To identify and pursue local and regional economic development initiatives.*

**Economic Development Strategy 5.1**

In conjunction with the Town of Clayton, support and jointly apply for funding to improve the Clayton Business Park, including extending natural gas to the Park and roadway and infrastructure improvements, as needed.

**Economic Development Strategy 5.2**

In conjunction with the Town of Clayton, promote the Clayton Business Park to renewable energy, food manufacturing, warehousing and distribution companies, etc. that may be interested in locating to Union County.

**Economic Development Strategy 5.3**

Create an incentive package for businesses, industries, and processing plants interested in locating at the Clayton Business Park. Incentives may include property tax abatement, Industrial Revenue Bonds, LEDA funds, etc.

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Chapter 5:  
**Housing**



## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

Housing is an essential component of all communities. Development of safe and affordable housing provides the security and stability needed to grow and live a healthy life. As development moves forward, it is important to create housing that is sustainable and has the potential to revitalize communities for the long term. The Housing Element provides an overview of the housing conditions in Union County and identifies opportunities and possible solutions to expand this basic service to the community.

## 5.2 HOUSING PROFILE

### Household Composition

As defined by the U.S. Census, households are categorized as either Family Households in which the members are related by birth or marriage, or Non-family Households whose members are not related or living alone.

As shown in Table 5.1, there has been a decrease in the number of households in Union County and those households are aging. In 2017, the total number of households in Union County was 1,424, a 18.1% decrease from 2010. Family households decreased by 31.5%, and the majority of the decrease was in households with children under 18 years. Average family size increased by 12.1%.

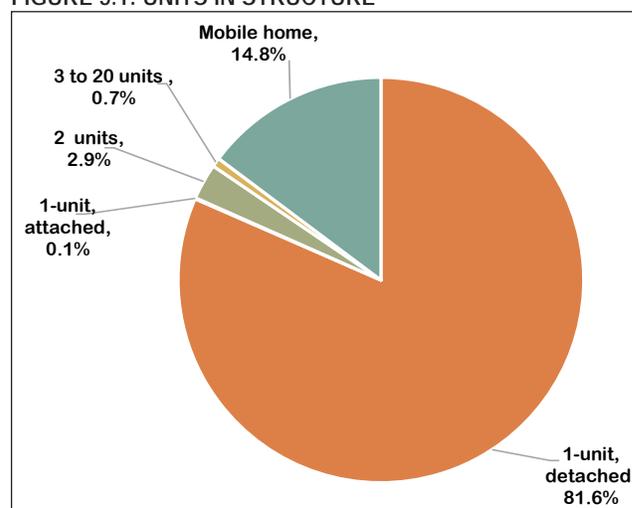
Between 2010 and 2017, non-family households increased by 11.2%, in part due to a 30.2%

increase in the number of householders living alone. Increases in this category were sharpest for those 65 or older; 51.6% since 2010.

### Housing Units and Types

Housing types in Union County are typical of many rural counties with a very high percentage of single family detached units. In 2017, there were an estimated 2,343 total housing units in Union County and 81.6% of these units were single-family detached dwellings, higher than the New Mexico average of 64%. Mobile homes comprised 14.8% of the housing units in Union County; lower than the New Mexico average of 16.9%.

FIGURE 5.1: UNITS IN STRUCTURE



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

TABLE 5.1: HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION			
Households by Type	2010	2017	% Change
Total Households	1,739	1,424	-18.1%
Family Households	1,193	817	-31.5%
With own children under 18 years	426	294	-31.0%
Average family size	3.07	3.44	12.1%
Non-Family Households	546	607	11.2%
Householder living alone	29.0%	37.9%	30.2%
Householders living alone 65 or older	14.7%	22.3%	51.6%
Households with individuals under 18 years	26.7%	22.6%	-15.4%
Households with individuals 60 years or older	45.6%	51.7%	13.4%
Average household size	2.52	2.53	0.4%

Source: U.S. Census 2010 and American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

### Housing Age

Approximately 75.8% of the housing stock in Union County was built prior to 1980. The decade with the largest number of structures built (18.3%) was 1950 to 1959. There were only two homes built in Union County after 2009. Union County’s housing stock is older than the New Mexico average where the largest number of structures, 17.8%, was built between 1990 and 1999 and only 4.6% was built in 1939 or earlier. An aging housing stock poses challenges for Union County as older structures often require costly rehabilitation and maintenance and are more likely to be abandoned.

Year Built	Union County	New Mexico
Total Housing Units	2,343	927,790
1939 or earlier	16.1%	4.6%
1940 to 1949	9.0%	4.1%
1950 to 1959	18.3%	9.7%
1960 to 1969	16.7%	10.3%
1970 to 1979	15.7%	17.7%
1980 to 1989	9.1%	16.9%
1990 to 1999	6.8%	17.8%
2000 to 2009	8.2%	15.9%
2010 to 2013	0.1%	2.2%
2014 or later	0.0%	0.8%

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

### Housing Occupancy

Housing occupancy classifies all dwellings according to whether they are occupied, unoccupied, or under construction during the time of data collection. In 2017, there were 2,343 total housing units in Union County; 60.8% were occupied and 39.2% were vacant. In comparison to New Mexico, 83.0% of housing units were occupied and 17.0% were vacant during the same period.

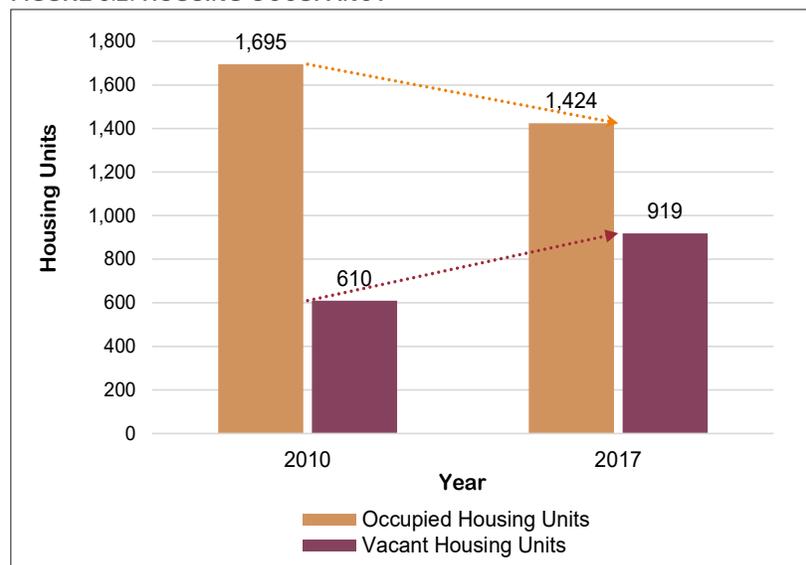
The housing occupancy trend for Union County shows a decrease in occupied housing units and an increase in vacant housing units. From 2010 to 2017, occupied housing units declined by 16.0% and vacant housing units increased by 50.6%. This change is much higher than New Mexico as a whole, which was 1.9% and 16.3% respectively.

### Vacancy Status

Vacancy rates are the proportion of housing units that are suitable for sale or rent, but are vacant. According to U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, ideally for rural areas, a healthy vacancy rate is approximately 7% for rental units and 2% for owner-occupied units.

In 2017, Union County had a homeowner vacancy rate of 2.8%, similar to the New Mexico average of 2.4%. The rental vacancy rate in Union County was 4.1%, much lower than the New Mexico rental vacancy rate of 8.9%. The low vacancy rate,

FIGURE 5.2: HOUSING OCCUPANCY



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

combined with a high percentage of vacant housing units, shows that much of the vacant housing in Union County is off the market and not available for purchase.

### Housing Tenure

In 2017, of the 1,424 occupied housing units in Union County, 65.8% were owner-occupied and 34.2% were renter-occupied. Between 2010 and 2017, owner-occupied units declined by 28.0% and rental units declined by 8.1%.

TABLE 5.3: HOUSING TENURE			
Occupied Housing Units	2010	2017	% Change
Occupied Housing Units	1,695	1,424	-13.6%
Owner-occupied	67.7%	65.8%	-28.0%
Renter-occupied	32.3%	34.2%	-8.1%

Source: U.S. Census 2010 and American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

### Cost-Burdened Households

Housing and utilities are typically the largest portion of monthly expenses for most households. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) considers households that pay over 30% of household income for housing and utility costs to be “cost-burdened” and households that pay more than 50% are considered “severely cost-burdened.”

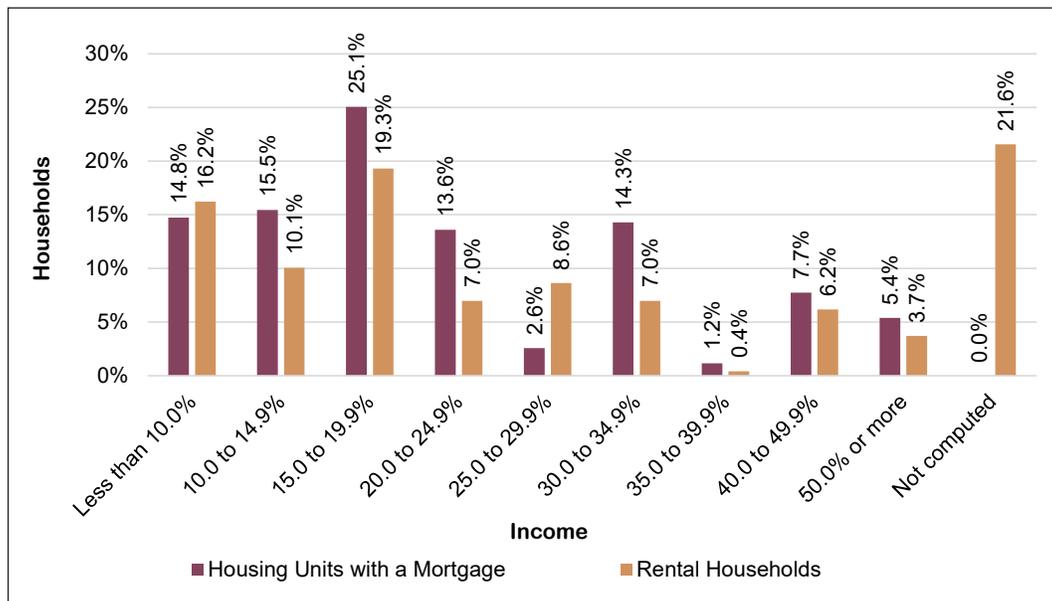
In 2017, 28.6% of owner-occupied households with a mortgage in Union County were considered cost-burdened. Of these households, 5.4% were considered severely cost-burdened. These percentages are higher than the New Mexico average of 30.8% and 13.3%, respectively.

Monthly owner costs for housing units with a mortgage showed 39.8% paid \$500 to \$999 per month; 30.7% paid \$1,000 to \$1,499 per month; and 19.2% paid \$1,500 to \$1,999 per month. The median monthly owner cost was \$1,010.

In 2017, 17.3% of rental households in Union County were considered cost-burdened. Of these households, 3.7% were severely cost-burdened. It should be noted that a large number of households (21.6%) were “not computed”, which may skew these numbers overall. In comparison, the New Mexico cost-burdened average was 44.5% for rental households, with 22.6% being severely cost-burdened.

For occupied household units paying rent in 2017, 44.5% paid less than \$500 and 49.5% paid \$500 to \$999 in gross rent. The median in gross rent was \$530. In comparison, the median in gross rent for New Mexico as a whole was \$809.

FIGURE 5.3: COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-2017.

### 5.3 HOUSING MARKET

#### Housing Values

In 2017, the median value for owner-occupied units in Union County was \$89,500. This was a relatively small decrease from \$91,900 in 2010. The majority of homes (36.1%) ranged in value of between \$50,000 to \$99,999 (see Figure 5.4). The second most common range of housing values in Union County was less than \$50,000.

In comparison, the 2017 median housing value for owner-occupied units in New Mexico as a whole was \$163,900. The proportion of New Mexico housing values in the \$50,000 to \$99,999 range was 14.2% and in the less than \$50,000 category, it was 12.2%.

#### Available Housing

Research on the realty websites Realtor.com and Zillow in January 2020 shows that there are very few available homes for sale in Union County and of those, nearly all are in Clayton. Homes for sale in Clayton vary in price from \$47,000 to \$142,000. Occasionally, a farm or ranch will come on the market in the unincorporated area of Union County ranging in price from several hundred thousand dollars into the millions. These types of properties appeal to a very narrow segment of the population and are often not affordable or attractive to most home buyers.

#### Rental Market

In 2017, rental units represented 34% of the total housing units in Union County. Over 74% of the

487 rental units in Union County are located in the Town of Clayton.

### 5.4 HOUSING FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

#### Seniors

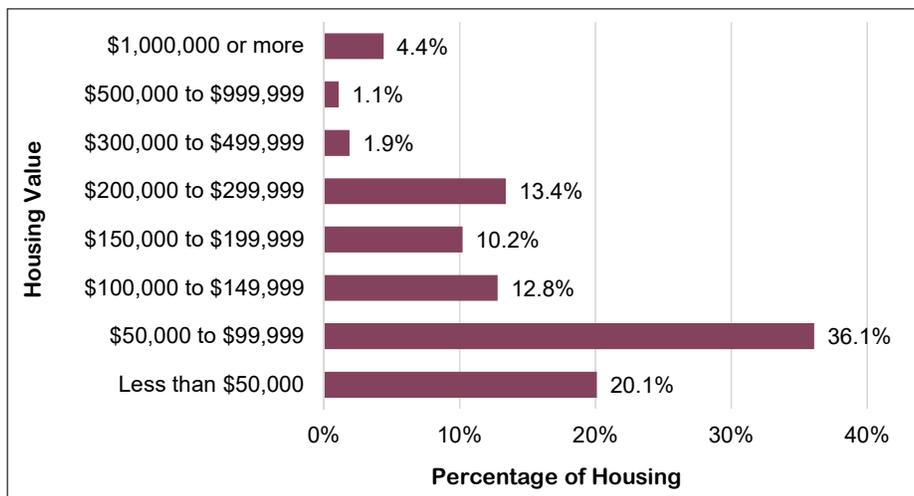
As demonstrated in the household data, Union County has a rapidly aging population and few options for specialized senior housing. The highest population growth in Union County between 2010 and 2017 was in the 80-84 age cohort. The overall the median age of Union County was 40.9 in 2017, significantly older than the New Mexico average of 37.3 years.

Isolation and feelings of disconnection are strong predictors of negative mental and physical health outcomes. As seniors live alone longer, they may become overwhelmed and their homes may deteriorate to unsafe conditions. These homes often contribute to vacant and abandoned housing problems as they become too burdensome to rehabilitate.

Solutions to housing issues for seniors include:

- Encourage the development of continuing care senior housing that provide seniors with ongoing care as health needs change;
- Develop programs to assist seniors with ongoing home repair and yard work; and
- Partner with local organizations to contact and check-in with seniors living alone to identify issues before they become unsafe and costly.

FIGURE 5.4: HOUSING VALUES



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2013-17.

## Veterans

The Veterans' Administration estimates that one-third of adult homeless men and nearly one-quarter of all homeless adults have served in the armed forces. This population is considered at risk due to poverty, lack of support from family and friends, and precarious living conditions in overcrowded or substandard housing. It is estimated that almost half of all homeless veterans suffer from mental illness, more than two-thirds suffer from alcohol or drug abuse, and nearly 40% have both psychiatric and substance abuse disorders.

Union County's veteran population in 2017 was 295, with 204 of those living in Clayton. Veterans represented 7.8% of the total population living below the poverty level and 32.2% were living with a disability.

Ensuring safe and secure housing and resources for the veteran population in Union County requires access to state and federal resources. Union County veterans are served by the Northeast Region Veterans' Services Office in Las Vegas. Each office is staffed by accredited Veterans' Service Officers that can assist veterans and their dependents with filing for federal and state benefits, including those for housing, and answer questions related to veterans' issues.

## People with Disabilities

As defined by the U.S. Census, "Population with a Disability" refers to those with a hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living difficulty. As shown in the Community Profile, the non-institutionalized population in Union County living with a disability was 690. Of those, the highest percentage living with a disability were in the age category of 75 years and over (59%). Disability types most prevalent in the population were those with an ambulatory difficulty (10.3%) and those with a independent living difficulty (8.6%), both of which require special housing accommodations.

People with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to housing issues due to cost, difficulty obtaining employment, and difficulty obtaining home assistance care. The New Mexico Department of Health has an office in Clayton that can help with

housing and home healthcare related benefits associated with Medicaid. Clayton Hospital Home Care is a home nursing provider that can also help provide assistance to people with disabilities living in their home. For housing assistance, the Clayton Housing Authority and Golden Spread Rural Frontier Coalition provide low-income housing (*for more detail on these programs, see Section 5.5 Housing Resources and Programs*).

## Homeless Population

The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness conducts point-in-time counts of the homeless population by county and in major cities. The latest count completed in 2013 showed that Union County did not have any individuals experiencing homelessness and 11 people were in need of supportive housing. Union County did not have any permanent supportive housing beds according to the report. Homelessness does not appear to be a pressing issue in Union County based on discussions with community members.

## 5.5 HOUSING RESOURCES and PROGRAMS

### USDA Rural Housing Service

The USDA Rural Housing Service offers a variety of programs to build or improve housing and essential community facilities in rural areas. This federal program offers loans, grants, and loan guarantees for housing, public safety facilities and equipment, hospitals, libraries, nursing homes, schools, and farm labor housing. Housing grants and loans support single-family and multi-family projects. Individuals can apply for grants and loans to rehabilitate housing units in need of repair to plumbing, sewer, structural, and other projects. This program also provides technical assistance for loans and grants available through non-profit organizations, Indian tribes, and government agencies.

### New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority

The New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) is a quasi-governmental entity that provides financing to make quality affordable housing and other related services available to low- and moderate-income New Mexicans. Using funding from housing bonds, tax credits, and other federal

and state agencies, the MFA provides resources to build affordable rental communities, rehabilitate aging homes, supply down payment assistance and affordable mortgages, offer emergency shelter and administer rental assistance and subsidies. The MFA partners with lenders, REALTORS, nonprofit organizations, local governments, tribal communities and developers throughout the state to make these programs and services available to all eligible New Mexicans. (see *Appendix B for more information on funding resources for housing by MFA*).

### **New Mexico Affordable Housing Act**

The New Mexico Affordable Housing Act, NMSA 1978, §6-27-1 et seq., is the enabling legislation that exempts affordable housing from the anti-donation clause of the New Mexico State Constitution. Under this legislation originally created in 2004, New Mexico counties or municipalities wishing to donate, provide or pay all, or a portion, of the costs of affordable housing (including land, acquisition, renovation, financing, or infrastructure) must have in place an Affordable Housing Plan, in addition to an Affordable Housing Ordinance. Both the Affordable Housing Plan and Ordinance must comply with specific requirements set forth in Section 4 of the Affordable Housing Act Rules.

The MFA is the entity responsible for ensuring compliance with the rules. The MFA provides funding for the development of Affordable Housing Plans and technical assistance in preparing the plans and ordinance that comply with the rules.

Considering the relative lack of available housing and a prevalence of deteriorated housing throughout Union County, it is recommended that Union County pursue funding to complete an Affordable Housing Plan. Given the relatively small population of Union County, it may be prudent for Union County and the Town of Clayton to jointly apply for, create, and adopt a joint Affordable Housing Plan.

### **Eastern Regional Housing Authority**

The Eastern Regional Housing Authority supplements the local Clayton Housing Authority by providing additional affordable housing vouchers throughout the 12 counties in eastern

New Mexico, including Chaves, De Baca, Eddy, Guadalupe, Harding, Lea, Lincoln, Otero, Quay, Roosevelt, Union, and Curry. It is one of three regional housing authorities that operate under the supervision of the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA). The MFA provides funding, training and technical assistance to the Eastern Regional Housing Authority, which in turn supports affordable housing by distributing and managing Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers and other federal rental assistance programs. The Eastern Regional Housing Authority is also responsible for cultivating partnerships between local governments, the state, and the private sector to plan and finance additional affordable housing construction in Eastern New Mexico.

## **5.6 HOUSING ISSUES and NEEDS**

### **Lack of Available Housing**

Individuals or families interested in living in Union County would find it difficult to find a home to purchase or rent. Clayton has the most options, which are very limited. While there are vacant houses in the towns and unincorporated areas of Union County, these homes are either unavailable for rent or purchase or are inadequate for occupancy. These issues, combined with few contractors that have the capacity or incentive to build new housing in Union County, creates a situation where existing or future residents simply cannot find available housing. This discourages younger individuals and families from settling in Union County for the long term. Economic development is also adversely impacted as it is dependent on the available workforce housing. The Des Moines Municipal Schools administration expressed frustration with the lack of housing for prospective teachers at Des Moines High School.

### **Affordable Housing**

Union County is in need of quality affordable housing for low to moderate income households. Affordable housing was a strong priority for respondents to the Community Survey with over 61% saying that Union County should increase its supply of affordable housing.

Adopting an Affordable Housing Plan and associated ordinance can solidify Union County's

commitment to increase affordable housing. An Affordable Housing Plan can help Union County determine affordable housing needs, including owner- and renter-occupied housing and housing for special needs populations. This will allow Union County to provide publicly-owned assets or in-kind contributions to encourage non-profit or for profit developers of affordable housing to build in Union County.

### Vacant Housing

Addressing vacant housing issues in Union County is an important step in raising the quality-of-life for residents. Working with communities to rehabilitate vacant and abandoned housing units into affordable housing would be an important step for Union County.

Respondents to the Community Survey identified the housing types most needed in Union County as single-family detached homes (61%); apartments (38%); and senior housing (29%). An affordable housing plan can assist Union County in developing strategies to alleviate the issue of vacant housing and create solutions for affordable housing.

### Housing Rehabilitation

Housing rehabilitation initiatives can help individuals maintain their homes at a safe and comfortable level. Housing rehabilitation programs can include code improvements, lead paint removal, accessibility improvements, electrical improvements, and landscaping repairs. HUD offers grants to low-income home owners through the HOME Rehabilitation Program as does the USDA through the Housing Repair and Loans and Grants Programs.

## 5.7 HOUSING GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and STRATEGIES

### HOUSING GOAL 1

**Increase the housing supply in Union County to include a range of types, sizes, and price ranges.**

#### **Objectives:**

- *To encourage the development of new market rate and affordable housing to meet the needs of Union County residents.*
- *To ensure the housing needs of special needs populations, such as the disabled, elderly, veterans, and single parent households, can be met.*
- *To reduce the housing cost burden on lower income households.*
- *To ensure Union County has access to funding sources available to local and county governments for all types of housing assistance.*

#### **Housing Strategy 1.1**

Complete and submit an application to the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) to fund the creation of an Affordable Housing Plan that complies with the New Mexico Affordable Housing Act, as amended. The Affordable Housing Plan should be accompanied by an Affordable Housing Ordinance. As part of this strategy, determine the feasibility of developing a joint Affordable Housing Plan with the Town of Clayton.

The Affordable Housing Plan should contain at a minimum:

- A comprehensive community and housing profile that includes demographic characteristics, household characteristics, economic profile, and local housing market conditions;
- Assessment of existing and projected housing needs by Average Median Income (AMI) levels, including for-sale housing, rental housing, and housing for special needs populations;
- Assessment of existing housing conditions and quantification of the existing housing

stock that is vacant and/or have major rehabilitation needs;

- Analysis and proposed solutions to the regulatory (land use development codes), non-regulatory (fees, environmental, land availability, financial), and policy constraints to affordable housing;
- Goals, policies, and quantifiable objectives to meet affordable housing needs (rental and owner-occupied) within a planning horizon of five years; and
- Public participation and input.

### Housing Strategy 1.2

In conjunction with developing an Affordable Housing Plan, identify incentives for the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing that may include:

- Create an inventory of County-owned land deemed appropriate for donation to an affordable housing developer of rental and for-sale units;
- Long term leases or discounts on County-owned land;
- Waiver or reduction of County property tax; and
- Payment for on- and/or off-site infrastructure improvements.

### Housing Strategy 1.3

Develop an educational program that provides information on:

- Available affordable housing programs, credit counseling, first time home buyer programs;
- Rehabilitation and maintenance assistance programs for very low income homeowners, seniors, and veterans;
- Down payment and closing cost assistance; and
- Referrals to local MFA-approved lenders.

### Housing Strategy 1.4

Identify an appropriate entity that will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Union County Affordable Housing Plan. As

part of this strategy, the responsible entity should attend MFA's training and technical assistance programs.

## HOUSING GOAL 2

### Support the rehabilitation of existing dilapidated, vacant, and/or abandoned housing units in Union County.

#### Objectives:

- *To ensure existing housing is safely maintained and halt the deterioration of Union County's existing housing stock.*
- *To address the negative impact that blighted housing conditions have on property values, quality of life, and the potential for attracting illicit activities.*
- *To foster new community investment in Union County.*

### Housing Strategy 2.1

Identify and acquire through condemnation, vacant and abandoned properties that are suitable for redevelopment and can be later conveyed by Union County at a reduced or donated value.

### Housing Strategy 2.2

Once an Affordable Housing Plan has been completed by Union County, seek partnerships with private or non-profit developers to rehabilitate vacant and abandoned housing in Union County for market rate and affordable housing.

### Housing Strategy 2.3

Develop a nuisance ordinance that addresses dangerous buildings, abandoned vehicles, overgrown vegetation, and storage of junk on residential properties. The ordinance should include definitions, inspection and enforcement procedures, civil penalties for non-compliance, and the ability for Union County to lien properties.

Chapter 6:  
**Water Resources &  
Drainage**



## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Protecting water resources is key for the long-term sustainability of Union County given the ranching and agricultural activities presently occurring. Water is also an important component for generating economic growth. The Water Resources and Drainage element provides a summary of the Northeast New Mexico Regional Water Plan, which describes the water supply, water demand, and sustainability actions to ensure good management of the resource. It also includes a summary of the annual Union County Hydrogeology Project, which measures aquifer levels and provides information to farmers making critical decisions about water usage and conservation. Other systems related to water, such as drainage management and dam safety, are described in this chapter.

## 6.2 WATER

Water is a critical resource in Union County. Most agricultural operations use independent wells. Domestic water service for much of the County is supplied by individual wells. Water supplies are mostly drawn from the Ogallala and Dakota formations of the groundwater aquifer within the Clayton underground water basin. This basin was declared by the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer in 2005. The southwestern part of the County is within the Tucumcari underground water basin.

### Northeast New Mexico Regional Water Plan

Union County is part of the Northeast New Mexico Water Planning Region, which is one of 16 such regions in the State of New Mexico. The Northeast New Mexico Regional Water Plan was completed and accepted by the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission in 2007 and updated in 2016. The Plan notes that Union County does not have any specific ordinances or comprehensive plan related to water use.

Groundwater is the source for 87% of the water used in the Northeast Water Planning Region; 93% of that is diverted for irrigated agriculture. The remaining 7% of groundwater usage is for municipal and livestock purposes. No surface water is used for domestic purposes. What little surface water is used is for irrigation and livestock.

### Future Demand

The Northeast Regional Water Plan estimated future water demand from 2020 through 2060. Both high and low estimates are provided based on population projections and continued agricultural use. It is estimated that agriculture in Union County will remain at 2010 levels, or in a low demand scenario, drop and then rise back up to 95% of the initial level. Livestock is also estimated to experience a decline in water usage. Based on the projections, Union County may experience a slight increase in water demand by 2060 or even a slight decrease in a low growth estimate scenario. However, it should be noted that availability of water supplies is critically important and may dictate actual future water usage.

### Municipal Water Systems

There are three municipal water supply systems with well fields in Union County. The Town of Clayton, Village of Des Moines, and Village of Grenville all have municipal water systems. Clayton operates a system that includes 19 total wells with four of those wells currently producing water for the Town. Clayton also operates a water treatment facility. The Village of Des Moines and Village of Grenville systems are much smaller by comparison. These two systems do not hold groundwater discharge permits, which means they do not have sewage treatment capabilities. Table 6.1 summarizes the usage for each of these municipal water systems.

TABLE 6.1: MUNICIPAL WATER SYSTEMS			
Water System	Population Served	Withdrawals (Acre-Feet)	Per Capita Use (GPCD*)
Clayton	2,401	538	200
Des Moines	200	25	111
Grenville	27	2	58

Source: Northeast New Mexico Regional Water Plan 2016. \*Gallons per capita per day.

Outside of these three municipal water systems, privately-owned wells provide domestic water for approximately 1,921 people in Union County. Combined, municipal water supplies and private commercial and domestic wells only account for

approximately 1.2% of the total water usage in Union County.

### **Irrigated Agriculture**

Agriculture irrigated by center pivot systems in Union County is concentrated in the eastern part of Union County near Sedan. Additional irrigated agriculture is located northeast of Clayton and in scattered areas throughout the rest of Union County. Irrigated agriculture in Union County used 96.6% of the total groundwater demand of 69,044 acre-feet and 73.8% of the 2,437 acre-feet of surface water in 2010.

### **Water Supply**

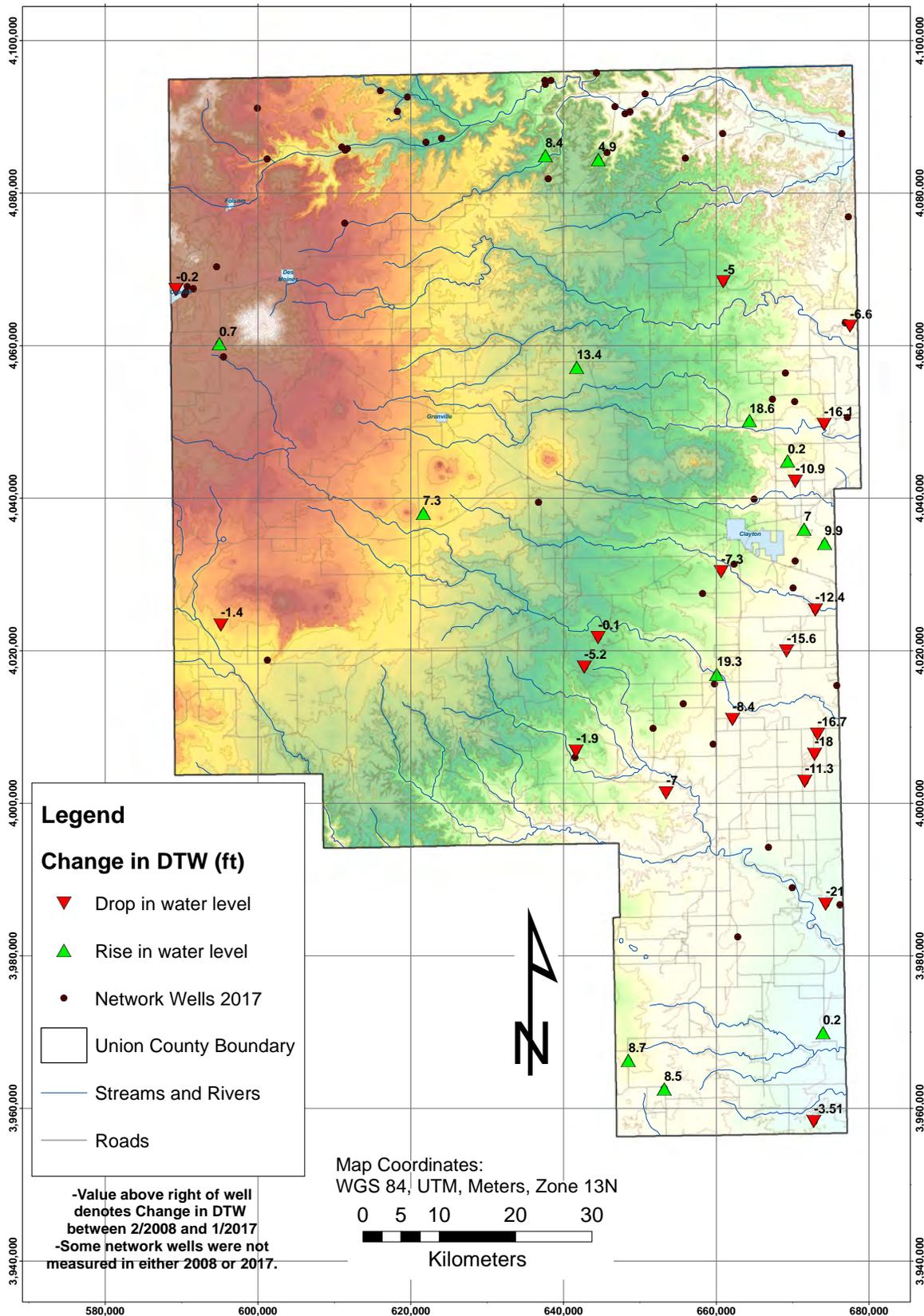
Water supply is a long-term issue for all communities reliant on groundwater wells, particularly those drawing from the Ogallala Aquifer. Climatic trends, increased drought, and changes in population all affect the amount of water available, as well as how much is used. As water is withdrawn from the underlying aquifer, rain and snowfall are needed to replenish it. Union County gets approximately 14-18 inches of precipitation per year, but this can be highly variable. While this supply problem is outside of the County's control, conservation measures can be put into practice by individual water users to limit the amount of water they withdraw from the aquifer.

Determining how much water is available and the impacts of usage are a critical component of understanding how conservation measures impact aquifer recharge. Union County has been proactive in this regard through its commitment to funding the Union County Hydrogeology Project for the past 10 years (Zeigler Geologic Consulting). This project, which is sponsored by the Northeastern Soil and Water Conservation District, measures the water levels in Union County wells every six months. The project began with 50 wells and currently is monitoring up to 80 wells. The program has been a true collaboration and many landowners support this effort. Farmers are able to participate in the process, view the data, track progress, and make determinations as to what is best for their own wells. Due to the complicated aquifer system below Union County, up to 95% of center pivot points are not connected to others, so each farm needs to take responsibility for its own conservation efforts.

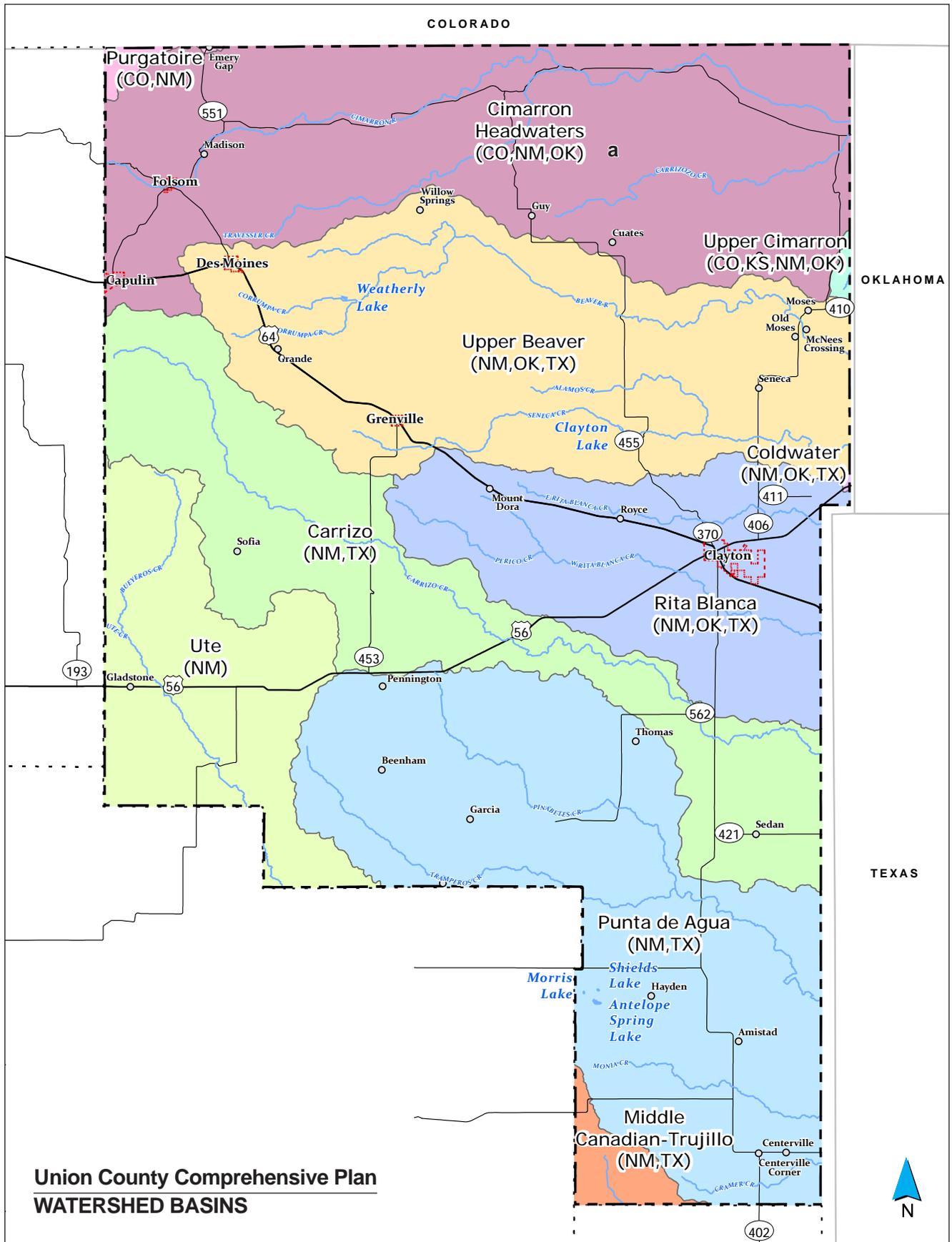
The results of the Hydrogeology Project show that declines are located primarily around Sedan and the Seneca Valley areas, which is where most of the irrigated agriculture occurs in Union County (see *Groundwater Level Changes, 2008-2017, next page*). This is also consistent with other studies that show water level declines up to more than 100 feet in the eastern part of Union County since the 1960s. Importantly, the rate of decline in the Sedan area has slowed from 3 to 5 feet per year in 2011 to less than one foot per year for the last two years of monitoring. However, continued estimated decline could impact 39% of wells in the Clayton underground water basin by 2060.

Groundwater mapping is just one way to understand and manage the water supply. Expanding the program region-wide has support from the Northeast New Mexico Regional Water Planning Group. Other strategies may include employing best agricultural practices, agricultural land trusts, dryland farming techniques, support for other agricultural water conservation measures, playa lake restoration projects, and planning for future growth such as this Comprehensive Plan or a 40-year water plan specific to Union County.

# Groundwater Level Changes 2008 - 2017



Source: Zeigler Geologic Consulting.



**Union County Comprehensive Plan  
WATERSHED BASINS**

Note: This map was recreated by Consensus Planning based on GIS data obtained from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, New Mexico office.

### 6.3 DRAINAGE

Union County is part of the Arkansas-White-Red River Basin, primarily drained by the Canadian River and its tributaries. Several smaller sub-basins fall within Union County, including the Cimarron Headwaters, Upper Beaver, Rita Blanca, Carrizo, Punta de Agua, Middle Canadian-Trujillo, and Ute basins (see *Watershed Basins map*, page 82).

Within these basins, only a few perennial streams exist, such as the Dry Cimarron River; however, they may have little or no surface flows during dry years. Several streams include levees or dams that help collect water from rainstorms. The largest reservoir in Union County is Clayton Lake, which is primarily used for recreational purposes. Other smaller reservoirs located throughout Union County may provide a source of irrigation for agricultural land uses, and numerous playa lakes collect rainwater and help recharge the underlying High Plains aquifer.

Most of Union County has not been mapped by FEMA to determine flood zones. As described in the Hazard Mitigation chapter, flooding occurs in Union County. The County Road Department has noted that severe storms occasionally wash out roads that require reconstruction afterward.

#### Playa Lakes Restoration

Playa lakes are a critical component of the drainage and aquifer recharge systems in Union County. These temporary wetlands contribute up to 95% of inflow to the Ogallala Aquifer. Playas also provide an important role in improving water quality by catching sediment and potential pollutants in surrounding prairie grasses prior to infiltration.

The ability of playas to function properly can be impacted by modifications and land use changes, such as planting agricultural crops in the playas, accumulation of sediment in the basin, or development around them. The New Mexico Environment Department has created a Rapid Assessment Method Playa Wetlands Field Guide that provides procedures and protocols for evaluating the ecological condition of playas. The Field Guide is part of the effort to promote effective management of wetlands with the goal of providing

information necessary to prevent continued decline of these resources.

The Playa Lakes Joint Venture is a regional partnership of federal and state agencies, including the New Mexico Environment Department, conservation groups, and private industry. It works with public and private landowners to assess playas and helps to develop restoration plans. Farmers and ranchers in Union County should consider collaborating with Playa Lakes Joint Venture and its various partners to explore suitable programs for playa restoration that complement the long-term plans for their properties.

### 6.4 DAM SAFETY

While most reservoirs in Union County are privately held and do not provide storage opportunities for most water users in the region, these surface water resources can be important for individual agricultural operations. In addition, dams also control water after rainfall events that could otherwise cause flooding downstream. The New Mexico Office of the State Engineer (NMOSE) periodically conducts inspections to assess safety issues on dams under its jurisdiction. While there is a low hazard potential from these dams in Union County, it should be noted that all of the dams were assessed to be in poor condition (see *Table 6.2*).

Dams in poor condition are those where a dam safety deficiency is recognized for realistic loading conditions, or when uncertainties exist as to critical analysis parameters. Further investigations and studies may be necessary. Fortunately, no dams in Union County were identified in unsatisfactory condition, which recognizes safety deficiencies requiring immediate or remedial actions.

According to news reports, New Mexico leads the nation with the highest percentage of high-hazard dams in poor condition or worse. The Office of the State Engineer received a special appropriation of \$200,000 for a dam safety risk assessment project, and the Legislature approved more than \$10 million for dams and other flood control projects in 2019. Lawmakers are also considering additional funding for dam restoration and repair in 2020. As smaller, lower-hazard dams, those in Union County may

TABLE 6.2: UNION COUNTY DAM SAFETY RANKINGS				
Dam	Condition Assessment	Deficiency	Hazard Potential	Estimate Repair Cost
Brown Reservoir Dam	Poor	Spillway capacity - 69% of required flood; unauthorized alter of spillway	Low	\$2,500,000
Clayton Dam	Poor	Spillway capacity 30% of required flood; seepage at downstream toe; woody vegetation; lack of design information	Low	\$3,000,000
Eklund Storage Works Dam	Poor	Outlet inoperable; woody vegetation; erosion on crest	Low	\$200,000
Gardner Dam	Poor	Spillway capacity - 37% of required flood; lack of design information	Low	\$2,500,000
Howard Robertson Dam	Poor	Severe erosion of embankment; conduit plugged; lack of maintenance	Low	\$100,000
Poling Erosion Control Dam	Poor	Spillway capacity 5% of required flood	Low	\$2,500,000
Poling Irrigation System Dam	Poor	Woody vegetation; inoperable outlet intake (buried in sediment); maintenance needed	Low	\$100,000
Smithson Reservoir No. 1	Poor	Spillway capacity <20% of required flood	Low	\$2,500,000
Smithson Reservoir No. 3	Poor	Spillway capacity <7% of required flood	Low	\$2,500,000
Smithson Reservoir No. 4	Poor	Spillway capacity <5% of required flood	Low	\$2,500,000
Snyder Lake Dam	Poor	Spillway capacity <20% of required flood	Low	\$2,500,000
Tramperos Creek Site 1 Dam	Fair	Lack of design information	Low	\$100,000
Weatherly Reservoir Dam	Poor	Lack of design information	Low	\$100,000

Source: Northeast New Mexico Regional Water Plan, 2016.

not be a high priority for funding, but dam owners should work with the Office of the State Engineer and other officials to complete the necessary studies to understand the full hazard potential and pursue funding for repairs, if necessary.

## 6.5 LIQUID WASTE and WATER QUALITY ISSUES

### Liquid Waste and Contamination

As a community reliant on groundwater, especially for those users not on a municipal system, it is critical to protect the water sources from contamination. Contamination can occur from point or non-point sources. Point sources may include municipal or industrial sources, leaking underground storage tanks, or landfills. Leaking underground storage tanks are one source of contamination, although in 2016, there were only four such tanks in Union County. All four were being cleaned up by the responsible party. This is down from 10 leaking tanks identified in the Northeast Regional Water Plan (Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, 2007).

Municipal or industrial facilities that discharge contaminants must have the relevant permit. The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Ground Water Quality Bureau issues Groundwater Discharge Permits for industrial users and from domestic wastewater systems that are over 5,000 gallons per day. In Union County, Groundwater Discharge Permits have only been issued for the following four entities to monitor their compliance with New Mexico groundwater quality standards:

- Capulin Volcano National Monument
- Town of Clayton Wastewater Treatment Facility
- Little Acres Mobile Home Park
- Northeast New Mexico Detention Facility

Two of these, the Capulin Volcano National Monument and Little Acres Mobile Home Park, have been transferred to the jurisdiction of the NMED Liquid Waste Program because they discharge less than 5,000 gallons per day. The Liquid Waste Program provides information on approved products and systems, as well as manages the permitting process for a liquid waste

permit for small systems and individual on-site septic systems.

Since Union County is a rural county, on-site septic tank systems are prevalent. Non-permitted septic tanks have become a major groundwater pollution issue in New Mexico, and could be an issue in Union County. Septic system discharges can percolate into the underlying aquifer.

Septic systems in Union County are permitted through the NMED Liquid Waste Program, which requires lots to be at least 3/4 acres in size among other requirements. The permit process involves payment of an application fee, and information including a detailed site plan, construction and system details, and verification of total flow for the structures served. Other information, such as soils and existing groundwater levels, may also be required.

In addition to the potential for septic systems to cause nonpoint source pollution, runoff from fertilized agricultural fields and feed lots can affect surface waters. It could also affect the groundwater because most groundwater recharge in Union County occurs via playa lakes.

### Watershed Planning and Restoration

One approach to addressing non-point source pollution is through Watershed-Based Planning and watershed restoration initiatives. Watershed-Based Planning is a strategy to manage multiple objectives, including, but not limited to, managing stormwater and flooding, watershed health and water quality, and recreation through the creation of Watershed-Based Plans (WBPs). These plans describe the water quality issues for the watershed and identify solutions and funding opportunities to address those issues.

The Canadian River Riparian Restoration Project, a collaboration between soil and water conservation districts in Northeast New Mexico, is an example of such an initiative that controls invasive vegetation along streams in the Canadian River watershed. Ute Creek in southwest Union County is part of the watershed. The primary task of this restoration initiative has been the removal of salt cedar and Russian olive from along the Canadian River and replacement with native species. The invasive

species that are being removed consume significant amounts of water and crowd out other native plants. They take over the banks of streams and narrow channels, which increases stream velocity. This combination of factors results in lower quality water in the affected streams and less water available for surrounding grasslands and to replenish the aquifer. By removing the invasive species, the Canadian River Riparian Restoration Project is restoring a historical ecosystem balance that will help with future water supplies in Northeast New Mexico.

## 6.6 FY2021-2025 ICIP

Union County continues to allocate funding for the Hydrogeology Project through its Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (FY2021-2025 ICIP). The ICIP indicates that \$75,000 has been funded to date. An additional \$175,000 is needed through 2025 for a total project cost of \$250,000, with \$25,000 in FY 2021, 2024, and 2025 and larger appropriations of \$50,000 in FY 2022 and 2023.

## 6.7 WATER RESOURCES & DRAINAGE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and STRATEGIES

### WATER RESOURCES & DRAINAGE GOAL 1

**Promote the sustainable and efficient management of water resources.**

#### **Objectives:**

- *To pursue water resource planning and management within Union County.*
- *To adopt a systematic and coordinated approach to monitoring groundwater resources.*
- *To address state and federal water policies that impact agricultural producers in Union County.*

#### **Water Resources & Drainage Strategy 1.1**

Create a 40-Year Water Plan for Union County that complies with the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer (NMOSE) requirements and determines current water use and future water demand in Union County.

#### **Water Resources & Drainage Strategy 1.2**

Continue the monitoring of groundwater levels in Union County through the Hydrogeology Project.

## **WATER RESOURCES & DRAINAGE GOAL 2**

### **Maintain an adequate and sustainable water supply in Union County.**

**Objectives:**

- *To ensure the water supply is capable of supporting existing and future development in Union County.*
- *To demonstrate the impact of new development to the aquifer and existing wells.*

#### **Water Resources & Drainage Strategy 2.1**

Develop a water conservation program through the reduction of water waste; public education; conservation incentives; water audits; and subdivision regulations.

#### **Water Resources & Drainage Strategy 2.2**

Amend the Union County Subdivision Ordinance to require new developments to provide proof of water rights, available water supply, and a study that shows the impact to the groundwater supply.

## **WATER RESOURCES & DRAINAGE GOAL 3**

### **Protect Union County’s groundwater supply from potential degradation.**

**Objectives:**

- *To ensure the public health, safety, and welfare.*
- *To educate residents on best practices for discharge of liquid waste and groundwater protection.*
- *To encourage the replacement of individual septic tanks with small package sewage treatment systems, where feasible.*

#### **Water Resources & Drainage Strategy 3.1**

Develop a Liquid Waste Ordinance for the unincorporated areas of Union County that requires the discharge of untreated liquid waste into:

- An enclosed system permitted by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED);
- A liquid waste treatment system permitted by the NMED; or
- A public sanitary sewer system.

The ordinance should also include enforcement and citation procedures for non-permitted or non-compliant liquid waste systems, and approval for installation of liquid waste systems.

#### **Water Resources & Drainage Strategy 3.2**

Develop a Hazardous Materials Ordinance for the unincorporated areas of Union County that prohibits the maintenance or storage of hazardous materials, and identifies drop-off locations for the proper disposal of hazardous materials.

#### **Water Resources & Drainage Strategy 3.3**

Create an educational program on groundwater protection that covers liquid waste and hazardous materials. This should include information on required setbacks between septic tanks and wells, required clearances between the bottom of trenches and groundwater, potential waterborne illnesses resulting from contamination, and financial assistance programs.

## **WATER RESOURCES & DRAINAGE GOAL 4**

### **Increase Union County’s capacity to handle major storm events.**

**Objectives:**

- *To protect the residents in unincorporated Union County from flooding and preserve property values.*
- *To minimize damage to public facilities, including roads, dams, and dry utilities.*
- *To allow for more on-site drainage to reduce the impact of flooding.*

#### **Water Resources & Drainage Strategy 4.1**

Create a stormwater design standard that establishes criteria to ensure drainage is handled properly with new development.

#### **Water Resources & Drainage Strategy 4.2**

Provide maintenance and improvements to existing drainage channels and other pertinent storm drainage conveyances.

#### **Water Resources & Drainage Strategy 4.3**

Collaborate with the Playa Lakes Joint Venture and private landowners on future playa restoration projects.

#### **Water Resources & Drainage Strategy 4.4**

In consultation with the NMOSE District 7, create a dam maintenance and improvement plan that prioritizes improvements to dams that have been deemed to be in poor condition by the Dam Safety Bureau.

Chapter 7:  
**Transportation**



## 7.1 INTRODUCTION

Transportation infrastructure is one of the most important services provided by Union County. Transportation in Union County consists of U.S. and State highways, County roads, and local municipal streets. The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad passes through the northern part of the County between Folsom, Des Moines, and Clayton, moving goods between Colorado and Texas. The Clayton Municipal Airpark provides air services.

The Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan is intended to guide decision-making and the setting of priorities for enhanced roads and other modes on a county-wide level. This section references regional planning documents, the Union County's Infrastructure Capital Improvements Plan (ICIP), and stakeholder interviews conducted as part of the planning process to describe existing conditions, roadway maintenance, and future transportation projects that will support public health, safety, and welfare, as well as promote economic development opportunities through the movement of people, goods, and services.

## 7.2 EXISTING ROADWAY SYSTEM

The existing roadway system is illustrated by the map on the following page. Roads in Union County connect the unincorporated areas of the County to the Town of Clayton, Villages of Des Moines, Folsom, and Grenville, and other communities around the County. Major roads also connect Union County to Raton and Springer and provide access to larger metropolitan areas, such as Pueblo, Colorado; Amarillo, Texas; and Albuquerque.

### US Highways

US Highway 87 generally runs west to east across Union County, and is a four-lane divided highway connecting Interstate 25 in Raton to Amarillo, Texas to the southeast. The entire length of the highway connects the Texas coastline north to Montana near the US/Canada border. US Highway 64 overlays the portion of US Highway 87 between Clayton and Raton. This section of highway is part of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, which is an important transportation corridor with potential to spawn economic development opportunities as

truck traffic transports goods from the US/Mexico border through Union County to Denver and other locations farther north. There is one rest area located along US Highway 87 in Union County, which was expanded to accommodate additional truck parking.

As mentioned above, US Highway 64 overlays a portion of US Highway 87, and connects Oklahoma to the east to the Four Corners region to the west. US Highway 64 is an important route for travelers heading to Taos, Red River, and Angel Fire.

US Highway 56 is an important cutoff from Interstate 25 at Springer that connects to Kansas in the northeast. It serves as a more direct route than Interstates 25 or 35 connecting between Interstate 40 and Interstate 70. US Highway 412 overlays US Highway 56/64 through Union County and connects from Interstate 25 eastward to Tulsa, Oklahoma.

### State Highways

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) maintains primary and secondary roads in Union County. This includes the US highways described above, as well as state highways. Roads managed by NMDOT include some dirt roads. NM 193 and 453 provide important north-south connections between US Highway 64/87 and US Highway 56/412. NM 120 connects to Roy and Interstate 25 at Wagon Mound to the southwest, and NM 402 connects Clayton to US Highway 54 at Nara Visa to the south of Union County. NM 325 creates a loop from US Highway 64/87 northward past the Capulin Volcano National Monument to Folsom and back to US Highway 64/87 at Des Moines. NM 456 connects Folsom east to the Oklahoma state line and follows the Dry Cimarron River for its entire distance.

### County Roads

Union County owns and maintains 1,194 miles of roadways. County roads consist of dirt and caliche surfacing, except for low water crossings, which are surfaced in concrete. These roads provide access and connection to most areas of the County.

### Local Streets

Local streets in the incorporated communities are maintained by each municipality. Only Clayton and

Des Moines have paved local roads. These local streets connect to the Union County road system.

### 7.3 FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

Functional classification of roadways informs roadway design, intended travel speeds, capacity, and the relationship to existing and future land uses. NMDOT uses functional classification for the following purposes: project prioritization, asset management, safety (roadway type is considered when evaluating the significance of crash rates), highway design standards, bridge programs (design and number of lanes), traffic control (signal devices and timing patterns), and developing maintenance programs.

NMDOT publishes a functional classification map for roadways across New Mexico, which was last updated in 2015. The default classification for all roads not assigned a higher class is “local,” indicating that federal funds cannot be applied for roadway improvements. Most roads in Union County, including all County-maintained roads, are local roads.

US Highway 87 from Texline in the east across the County to Capulin is considered a principal arterial, which is the third largest classification after interstates and freeways. Principal Arterials serve as the major roadways system and are designed for the large amounts of traffic. US Highway 64/56 heading northeast from Clayton is also listed as a principal arterial. US Highway 56/412 heading southwest of Clayton is listed as minor arterial. This is the only minor arterial in Union County. Minor Arterials serve slightly less traffic at lower speeds than Principal Arterials.

All of the state highways in Union County are considered major or minor collectors, which collect traffic from local roads and connect them to larger arterial roadways. Major collectors include NM 72 between Folsom and Raton; NM 102 through Sedan; NM 120 between US Highway 56/412 and Roy; NM 325 between Capulin, Folsom, and Des Moines; NM 370 northwest of Clayton; NM 402 south of Clayton; NM 406 northeast of Clayton; NM 410 into Oklahoma; NM 417 into Texas; NM 456 along the Dry Cimarron River; NM 538 on the east side of Clayton; and NM 551 into Colorado.

Minor collectors include NM 102 between NM 402 and Mosquero; NM 411 northeast of Clayton; NM 420 between NM 402 and NM 102; NM 453 between Grenville and US Highway 56/412; NM 455 to Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways; and NM 562 west of NM 402.

### 7.4 ROADWAY MAINTENANCE

The Union County Road Department maintains dirt roads throughout the County. It also maintains a list of prospective projects containing up to five years worth of work. With current equipment, funding, and staffing, the County is able to make improvements to approximately 12 to 30 miles of roadway each year over a 9-month period. Improvement projects include the replacement of culverts and cattle guards, and road surfacing with approximately six inches of compacted caliche to create a stable driving surface 20 feet wide, where possible. Regular maintenance includes blading the roadway surfaces.

To determine what roads should be improved, the County creates a schedule of projects based on numbers provided by the NMDOT District 4 office. These projects are submitted to the NMDOT in order to provide the required funding, and contingencies are made in case other roadways not identified are washed out by flooding following severe weather events.

Union County is limited by funding, but its also limited in equipment. The County is currently using several trucks and belly dumps from the 1990s. A water truck from 2015 is a newer vehicle in the fleet. Replacement vehicles and equipment are listed on the County’s ICIP, so the important task of roadway maintenance can continue.

Other roadway maintenance issues revolve around the availability of caliche and water to complete the planned maintenance. Union County relies on donations of caliche from private property owners near the roads being improved. Water availability is an important factor in the cost of the work, as long water hauling distances increase the cost and time of a project. Water is key because the moisture is necessary to compact and harden the caliche surface. Caliche donations are possible because



the property owners often are users of the roads that are being improved.

Union County has had access to approximately three caliche pits per year since 1998. Caliche costs significantly less per mile than using asphalt; \$35-40,000 per mile compared to \$1 million per mile. Switching to asphalt would also require new equipment not currently available at the County.

NMDOT uses available funding to maintain the paved primary and secondary roads in Union County. Currently, the rehabilitation of approximately 10 miles of U.S. Highway 87 is occurring between Clayton and the Texas state line. In addition, maintenance activities are occurring between Clayton and Raton, and chip filling is being done on NM 56. Signage is being added at the Texas and Oklahoma Ports of Entry to guide visitors to local attractions.

### Community Survey Results

Community members were asked about roadway maintenance and improvements as part of the Comprehensive Plan Community Survey. Respondents overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed (84.8%) that roadway maintenance and improvements should be prioritized by Union County. Respondents were asked to identify the three roads in Union County they thought were most in need of improvement. With the exception of US 64/87, all of the roads identified by respondents are state highways (*for more detail about these and other results from the Community Survey, see Appendix B*).

The Road Improvement Priorities map (*see next page*) and Table 7.1 shows the ten roads in Union County that were identified most frequently for roads in need of improvement. Each road is numbered from 1 to 10, with 1 being the road that received the highest number of citations and 10 being the road that received the lowest number of citations. It should be noted that these results do not mean there are not other roads in Union County in need of improvement; these are the roads that were cited most frequently by the survey respondents. There were several local streets in Union County and the Town of Clayton that were cited by survey respondents receiving one or two citations each.

TABLE 7.1: COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS - ROAD IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

Priority	Road
1	Highway 402 - Nara Visa Highway
2	US 64/87 - Raton Highway/Texline Highway
3	Highway 370 - Lake Highway
4	Highway 417 - Centerville Highway
5	Highway 456 - Dry Cimarron Highway
6	Highway 56 - Springer Highway
7	Highway 421 - Sedan Highway
8	Highway 406 - Kenton Highway
9	Highway 455 - Clayton Lake Highway
10	Highway 411 - Booster Station Highway

Source: Union County Comprehensive Plan Community Survey, Consensus Planning, 2019.

Highway 402 (Nara Vista Highway), which connects south from the Town of Clayton toward Sedan, Amistad, and eventually connecting to US Highway 54 at Nara Visa, received the most citations. The second highest number of citations were for “All County Roads” followed by US Highway 64/87 - Raton Highway/Texline Highway. These results should be referenced as Union County considers road improvement priorities as part of the ICIP process.



Folsom Road.



## 7.5 LONG RANGE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Union County does not have its own long-range transportation plan. The Eastern Plains Council of Governments (EPCOG) coordinates long range planning for Union County through the Northeastern Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NERTPO). NERTPO develops a long range transportation plan that provides an opportunity for elected officials, organizations, and citizens to determine the future transportation system needs and how to serve them. The Northeast Regional Transportation Plan incorporates a 25-year planning horizon.

The Regional Transportation Plan identified the following five goals:

- Goal 1: Operate with transparency and accountability.
- Goal 2: Improve the safety and public health for all system users.
- Goal 3: Preserve and maintain our transportation system for the long term.
- Goal 4: Provide multi-modal access and connectivity for community prosperity and health.
- Goal 5: Respect New Mexico's cultures, environment, history, and quality of life.

Important points of discussion in the development of the Regional Transportation Plan focused on the importance of rail, maintenance of existing infrastructure, developing the system to support tourism, and expanding and improving public transportation to benefit smaller rural communities.

### Ports-to-Plains Corridor Designation

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor is an uninterrupted, multi-lane, divided highway that transports goods and services from Mexico and the Border Region through west Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, and ultimately, Canada and the Pacific Northwest. Union County is located on one of two primary routes under this designation. This western route connects I-27 at Amarillo through Clayton and Union County to I-25 at Raton. This cutoff allows quicker connection between the two Interstates

than the eastern route that connects north from Amarillo to I-70 before heading west to Denver.

The route through Union County also provides easy access to other Colorado Front Range communities, including Pueblo and Colorado Springs. According to discussions with NMDOT staff, there is a push from Clayton leaders and the Ports-to-Plains Alliance to make US Highway 64/87 through Union County part of Interstate 25.

### Future Transportation Projects

Future transportation projects are identified on Union County's FY2021-2025 ICIP, and generally focus on repair and maintenance of the existing roadway system. Roadway improvements are a high priority, as well as specific upgrades to Lonetree Road and Rawhide Road.

State roadway improvements identified on the FY2021-2025 ICIP include US Highway 64/87 and US Highway 56, as well as NM 402 and 406. NMDOT is currently working on a project to rehabilitate 10 miles of the eastbound lanes on US Highway 87 between Clayton and Texline, Texas. Conversations with the NMDOT District 4 office revealed that work on NM 370 may include paving up to 40 miles of dirt road with drainage improvements north of the Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways area.

Union County has also placed a high priority on replacing its outdated road equipment, including multiple trucks, a dump truck, crusher, and trailer over the next five years. Other equipment identified for purchase include new winter gates for fiscal year 2021.

### Access to State Lands

Union County has a significant amount of state-owned land, which may be available for recreational purposes, including hiking and hunting. Unfortunately, many acres of this land may be surrounded by private property in a checkerboard pattern with no public access, land locking the state-owned lands. This is common across New Mexico, as more than one million acres of State Trust Land is inaccessible to the public, the second highest acreage of any western state. The State Land Office is looking at ways to expand public

access. Union County could assist this process, along with private property owners, to identify ways to provide public access to these state lands.

## 7.6 TRANSPORTATION MODES

### Personal Vehicle

According to the Community Survey, 100% of the respondents utilize personal cars and trucks for transportation. Typical of rural communities, residents often need to travel long distances, whether for work or for errands. According to US Census data, in 2017, residents of Union County commuted an average of 15 minutes for work. Interestingly, most residents (48.7%) spent less than 10 minutes traveling to work. This is a much higher rate than the New Mexico average of 17.2%. This may likely be due to most residents of Union County living and working in Clayton.

In contrast, 11.4% of Union County residents commuted between 45 and 59 minutes to work. This is also much higher than the New Mexico average of 5.2%. This likely shows the distinction of travel time between workers in or near municipal areas like Clayton and those living farther out in the County and traveling for employment. Some of this travel is likely to other cities and towns outside of Union County.

### Bicycles and Pedestrians

In addition to vehicular travel, other modes of transportation are also used. Second to vehicular travel, 19% of residents walk and 3.2% use bicycle or transit to move around. Sidewalks and pedestrian paths are uncommon in Union County and the various communities in the County, with the exception of Clayton. Clayton has sidewalks along approximately 50% of its streets. Bicycle infrastructure in Union County generally consists of wide shoulders along the paved highway system that allow for bicycle travel between the various communities. The US Highways generally have wider than 4-foot wide shoulders available, but are also encumbered by rumble strips. The State Highways have less than four feet available, and often are less than two feet. Unpaved sections of State Highways may also pose problems for bicyclists trying to use those roadways.

### Transit

Transit service in Union County is provided by the Golden Spread Rural Frontier Express. It is only one of two rural public transit systems in Northeast New Mexico. Golden Spread provides transit services to locations within a four-state area, including New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, and Oklahoma. Its fleet features three paratransit vans for mobility-impaired residents. Golden Spread provides convenient on-demand curbside service for all manner of local travel required, including shopping, beauty services, visiting friends, or to medical appointments. Union County may want to look into the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) to ensure quality transit service can be provided so residents have the ability to get where they need even when they do not have access to a personal vehicle.

In addition to providing local transit services, Golden Spread also operates as the official Greyhound ticket agent and bus station in Clayton. Greyhound service connects from Clayton to Raton and Amarillo where transfers can be made to other destinations.

### Air Travel

Union County is served by the Clayton Municipal Air Park, a small general aviation airport owned and operated by the Town of Clayton. Improvements at the Air Park provide the capacity to allow 32,000-pound airplanes to land. Other improvements have included terminal upgrades and hangar additions. Funding was recently awarded by the US Department of Transportation to the Town of Clayton for improvements to Taxiway A.

According to the 2015 Airport Master Plan and July 2019 NAVAID data, there are 13 aircraft based on the field. Of those 13 aircraft, 11 are single engine airplanes along with one helicopter and one ultralight. The 2015 Master Plan reported 1,142 annual aircraft operations in 2013. 2019 NAVAID data showed an average of 67 aircraft operations per week, which would extrapolate to 3,484 annual aircraft operations for the 12-month period ending April 5, 2019.

Other nearby airports surrounding Union County are the Raton Municipal Airport and Springer Municipal

Airport in Colfax County to the west; Boise City Airport in Boise City, Oklahoma to the northeast; Dalhart Municipal Airport in Dalhart, Texas to the southeast; and Moore County Airport in Dumas, Texas to the southeast.

### 7.7 RAIL and FREIGHT

The rail system has played an important role in the development of Northeastern New Mexico. Clayton was incorporated in 1908 along the rail route that continues to pass through the Town. The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad passes through Union County from the Colorado state line north of Folsom to the Texas state line near Texline as part of its Powder River Basin Corridor Twin Peaks Subdivision. This Class I railroad serves northbound traffic only with an average of eight trains per day. The track generally runs parallel to US 87 from the Texas state line through Clayton to Des Moines where it is diverted northward to Branson, Colorado. From there it continues on to Trinidad, Colorado. Rail and other freight transportation is an important component for certain industries, particularly agriculture and mining, which are common in Union County.

Passenger rail is not provided in Union County, but Amtrak operates two long-distance routes within New Mexico, including the Southwest Chief and the Sunset Limited. The Southwest Chief stops in Raton, which is just west of Union County, and accessible to Union County residents. The Southwest Chief links Chicago, Kansas City, Albuquerque, and Los Angeles, which is a distance of 2,256 miles. Other stops in New Mexico other than Raton include Las Vegas, Lamy, Albuquerque, and Gallup. According to the 2014 New Mexico State Rail Plan, the Raton station saw the third most boardings and alightings in New Mexico behind Albuquerque and Gallup with 16,292 in FY 2012. In previous fiscal years, Raton had been the second-busiest stop behind Albuquerque, but was overtaken by Gallup.

#### Freight

As previously mentioned, Union County is bisected by US Highway 64/87, which is part of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor. This corridor is a primary route for truck traffic carrying freight between

Mexico, the United States, and Canada. NMDOT adopted the 2015 New Mexico Freight Plan, which primarily addresses freight transportation issues for trucking and rail. Goals of the Freight Plan address improving safety, which includes provision of adequate truck parking, as well as preserving and maintaining the truck network as part of the transportation assets. While carrying the Ports-to-Plains designation, US Highway 64/87 through Union County is not designated as a “Priority Freight Corridor” in the New Mexico Freight Plan. Regardless, Union County may be able to request support from NMDOT and other agencies in prioritizing maintenance and other improvements along this important roadway.

The New Mexico Freight Plan was completed ahead of new federal legislation, the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act of 2015. This Act created provisions for states to designate “Critical Rural Freight Corridors.” NMDOT recognized this in a 2017 addendum to the 2015 Freight Plan, but has not yet designated such critical corridors. According to the Federal Highway Administration, New Mexico is authorized to designate approximately 202 miles of Critical Rural Freight Corridors based on roadway centerline miles. This is in addition to Critical Urban Freight Corridors, which 101 miles can be designated. Union County should be involved in future discussions for the designation of these corridors, as well as any updates to the New Mexico Freight Plan priority corridors to ensure the development of Ports-to-Plains might remain a priority on the state level in addition to the local level.

An important consideration in freight transportation are federal hours-of-service regulations, which stipulate the amount of time truck drivers may be active or resting. There is one rest stop along the US Highway 64/87 corridor in Union County. The Sierra Grande Rest Area in Des Moines has been expanded to accommodate more truck parking than previously available, but these rest areas do not have many services available. The Town of Clayton is exploring the creation of a truck stop to accommodate increased traffic as an economic development opportunity.

### 7.8 FY2021-2025 ICIP

Transportation projects and equipment needs comprise a majority of Union County’s FY 2021-2025 Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP); 17 of 27 total projects on the ICIP are transportation-related. The projects can be further broken down with nine projects for equipment and facilities, including improvements for Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways; four related to US and State Highway repairs and maintenance; and four for local County roadway improvements and upgrades. Table 7.2 identifies these projects and

cost of improvements by year. None of the projects have been funded to date.

A comparison of these improvements to the Community Survey results shows that the proposed projects could address half of the public’s top ten road improvement priorities, including improvements if those improvements rehabilitate NM 455. The public’s top improvement priorities not currently on the ICIP include NM 370 (#3), NM 417 (#4), and NM 456 (#5).

**TABLE 7.2: FY2021-2025 ICIP - TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS**

Year	Project Title	Funded To Date	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	Total Cost
2021	Union County Road Equipment Crusher	-	\$500,000	-	-	-	-	\$500,000
2021	Union County Road Improvements	-	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$750,000
2021	Union County Road Department Truck	-	\$150,000	-	-	-	-	\$150,000
2021	US Highway 64/87	-	\$15,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$12,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$67,000,000
2021	US Highway 56 Repairs/ Maintenance	-	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$50,000,000
2021	Highway 402 Repairs/ Maintenance	-	\$15,000,000	\$12,000,000	\$12,000,000	\$15,000,000	\$10,500,000	\$64,500,000
2021	Highway 406 Repairs/ Maintenance	-	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$10,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$41,000,000
2021	Winter Gates	-	\$50,000	-	-	-	-	\$50,000
2021	Clayton Lake State Park & Dinosaur Trackways Improvements	-	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$500,000
2022	Road Department Building Renovate	-	-	-	\$75,000	\$70,000	\$105,000	\$250,000
2022	Road Department Truck	-	-	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	-	\$450,000
2022	Road Department Equipment Trailer	-	-	\$50,000	-	-	-	\$50,000
2022	Road Department Dump Truck	-	-	\$150,000	-	-	-	\$150,000
2022	Road Pick-ups Equipment Purchase	-	-	\$50,000	\$50,000	-	-	\$100,000
2023	Union Road Upgrades	-	-	-	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	\$2,500,000
2023	Lonetree & Rawhide Road Improvements	-	-	-	\$1,267,500	-	-	\$1,267,500
2024	Road Improvements	-	-	-	-	\$550,000	\$575,000	\$1,125,000

## 7.9 TRANSPORTATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and STRATEGIES

### TRANSPORTATION GOAL 1

**Maintain safe roadway conditions throughout Union County.**

**Objectives:**

- *To establish a long-range maintenance and funding plan for roadway improvements.*
- *To identify roadways and intersections that function below Level of Service C and program available funding accordingly.*
- *To ensure roadways are developed, extended, and/or improved to meet adopted functional classification standards.*

#### Transportation Strategy 1.1

Create an Asset Management Plan for the Union County roadway system network. Apply for funding to the New Mexico Finance Authority. The Asset Management Plan should include, but not be limited to:

- A Pavement Management Program with identification of all street assets, including pavement condition;
- Cost projections for future needs;
- Funding strategies; and
- Prioritize projects based on roadway condition, traffic counts, safety considerations, current and proposed land use, and public support.

#### Transportation Strategy 1.2

Create a Freight Plan to determine freight volumes, origins and destinations; and identifies and prioritizes improvements to roads, rail crossings, and bridges to advance Union County's position as a transportation hub in Northeast New Mexico.

#### Transportation Strategy 1.3

Evaluate the existing functional classifications of Union County roadways and determine whether revisions are needed based on capacity, travel speeds, and adjacent land use and development. Coordinate these findings with Northeastern Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NERTPO) and NMDOT.

#### Transportation Strategy 1.4

Work with NMDOT on improving and expanding services at rest stops, including the Sierra Grande Rest Area, along US 87/64.

### TRANSPORTATION GOAL 2

**Provide appropriate roadway and multi-modal access to accommodate existing and future development in Union County.**

**Objectives:**

- *To ensure access to future development is provided through new roads or upgrades to existing roads.*
- *To plan for and support transportation improvements for economic development purposes.*
- *To ensure adequate rights-of-way for future road and intersection expansion.*

#### Transportation Strategy 2.1

In consultation with NERTPO and NMDOT, determine and plan for new roadways to accommodate existing demand and future growth in Union County. As new roadways are planned, complete the necessary acquisition of rights-of-way, environmental analyses, and engineering design.

#### Transportation Strategy 2.2

Determine the feasibility of adding bicycle lanes within US 87/64 and NM 370 rights-of-way or constructing adjacent multi-use trails, as part of the designated Recreation Loops identified on the Future Land Use Scenario.

#### Transportation Strategy 2.3

Pursue NMDOT funding available through the Local Government Road Fund, Municipal Arterial Program, Cooperative Projects, Safety Projects, Bicycle/Pedestrian/Equestrian Program (BPE), Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and Recreational Trails Program (RTP).

### TRANSPORTATION GOAL 3

**Encourage the expansion of transit services in the unincorporated areas of Union County within close proximity to the incorporated communities of Clayton, Des Moines, and Folsom.**

**Objectives:**

- *To identify areas with concentration of jobs and workers within the unincorporated areas of Union County that could be reasonably served with transit.*
- *To accommodate the transportation needs of elderly, disabled, residents or residents that do not own personal vehicles.*

#### Transportation Strategy 3.1

In coordination with the Golden Spread Rural Frontier Express, seek additional state or federal funding for enhancements to and expansion of local and regional transit service to meet current and future mobility needs in the unincorporated areas of Union County.

#### Transportation Strategy 3.2

Expand transit to serve tourists seeking to visit Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways, Capulin Volcano National Monument, and other regional attractions.

### TRANSPORTATION GOAL 4

**Support the expansion to and improvement of the Clayton Municipal Airpark.**

**Objectives:**

- *To improve airport safety and meet current FAA design regulations.*
- *To foster joint economic growth opportunities for Union County and the Town of Clayton.*

#### Transportation Strategy 4.1

Work with the Clayton-Union County Chamber of Commerce to identify existing and future businesses that may benefit from and desire airport services. Begin targeted promotional advertisements and activities, as needed.

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Chapter 8:

# Public Facilities & Services



## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

Residents often rank their quality-of-life according to how safe they feel in their community, their access to healthcare services and providers, and the quality of primary, secondary, and post secondary education. Social services, including senior centers, libraries, and community activities, are also important components that contribute to quality of life.

## 8.2 PUBLIC SAFETY

An individual's sense of safety can have a profound effect on how they interact with others in the community. A community's sense of safety can increase well-being and contribute to building strong, vibrant places to live. Union County has dedicated professionals and volunteers that work hard to maintain a safe environment for all residents. Most Community Survey respondents (65%) believe that Union County provides adequate public safety services. The following section provides an overview of the Union County Sheriff Department and the Union County Fire Departments.

### Union County Sheriff's Department

The Union County Sheriff's Department is the primary law enforcement body in Union County. The Sheriff's Department is located in the previous Armory National Guard building on Airport Road in Clayton. The Sheriff's Department operates out of two stations, one in Clayton where the Sheriff and two deputies are headquartered and one in Des Moines where the Undersheriff is headquartered.

The primary functions of the Union County Sheriff's Department are to:

- Assist with all public safety issues, such as law enforcement and traffic control;
- Serve court orders to Union County residents for the Union County Court;
- Transport prisoners from the County Jail or the Northeast New Mexico Correctional Facility to other correctional facilities in New Mexico;
- Assist NMDOT and New Mexico State Police on road closures and traveler rescue during inclement weather; and



*Union County Sheriff Department located in the old New Mexico Guard Armory.*

- Work in partnership with the Clayton Police Department and New Mexico State Police on all matters related to law enforcement and public safety.

The Sheriff's Department main facility in Clayton is large enough to conduct training classes for deputies and other organizations. The Department hosts classes with New Mexico Game and Fish on hunting and gun safety and the Northeast New Mexico Detention Facility for correctional officer training.

The primary source for Union County equipment funding is from the New Mexico Law Enforcement Protection Fund. The Department maintains Hummers located around Union County, road maintainers, one bulldozer, and four-wheel drive officer vehicles.

The Sheriff's Department is very engaged with the Union County community. The Department supports a Pee Wee Basketball league in the Department's gymnasium; coordinates with the local Rotary Club on Christmas events; and holds an annual Health Fair in conjunction with the Union County General Hospital.

### Sheriff's Department Needs

The Sheriff's Department is in need of additional deputies. Ideally, the Department needs six deputies and only two positions are currently filled. The Sheriff noted the loss of officers to the Northeast New Mexico Detention Facility due to higher pay. The Sheriff is working on recruitment

of officers from within and outside of Union County.

Additional training is needed to monitor hemp farms to ensure farm operations are meeting all applicable regulations for legal cultivation. The Department would also need additional training if marijuana use is legalized in New Mexico over the next few years.

### Union County Fire Departments

There are eight fire districts within Union County as shown on the Fire Districts map (see next page) and in Table 8.1 below.

TABLE 8.1: FIRE DEPARTMENTS		
District	ISO Rating	# of Stations & Substations
Amistad	9	1 main station
Capulin	8A	1 main station
Clayton	5	1 main station
Des Moines	6	1 main station
Folsom	6	1 main station and 1 substation
Grenville	8	1 main station
Rabbit Ears	6	1 main station and 3 substations*
Sedan	7	1 main station and 1 substation

\*Largest fire district in New Mexico



Sedan Fire Department.

Union County is proud to have mostly all volunteer fire departments protecting residents. With the exception of Clayton, approximately 100-110 volunteer fire-fighters and emergency medical technicians contribute their time to staff the eight fire stations in the County. All volunteers receive 40-hours of mandatory training per year.

### Fire Department Needs

Two departments are in need of facility upgrades; Amistad needs a complete replacement of its outdated facility and Rabbit Ears-1 is in need of expansion of two bays.

The Department also expressed difficulty meeting New Mexico regulations for equipment and training. Equipment is required to be replaced every two years and the Fire Department's budget is not adequate to meet the requirements. The Fire Department works hard to maintain volunteer status, which is difficult due to costs and the personal time allocation.

## 8.3 PUBLIC FACILITIES

Quality public facilities reinforce a community's identity and provide the structure for essential public services. Community gathering spaces can support positive activities for youth, families, seniors, and social organizations. Community members come to depend on the services in these facilities for health and wellness, positive social interactions, and recreational opportunities. The following provides an overview of the facilities and services available to the Union County community.

### Union County Courthouse Complex

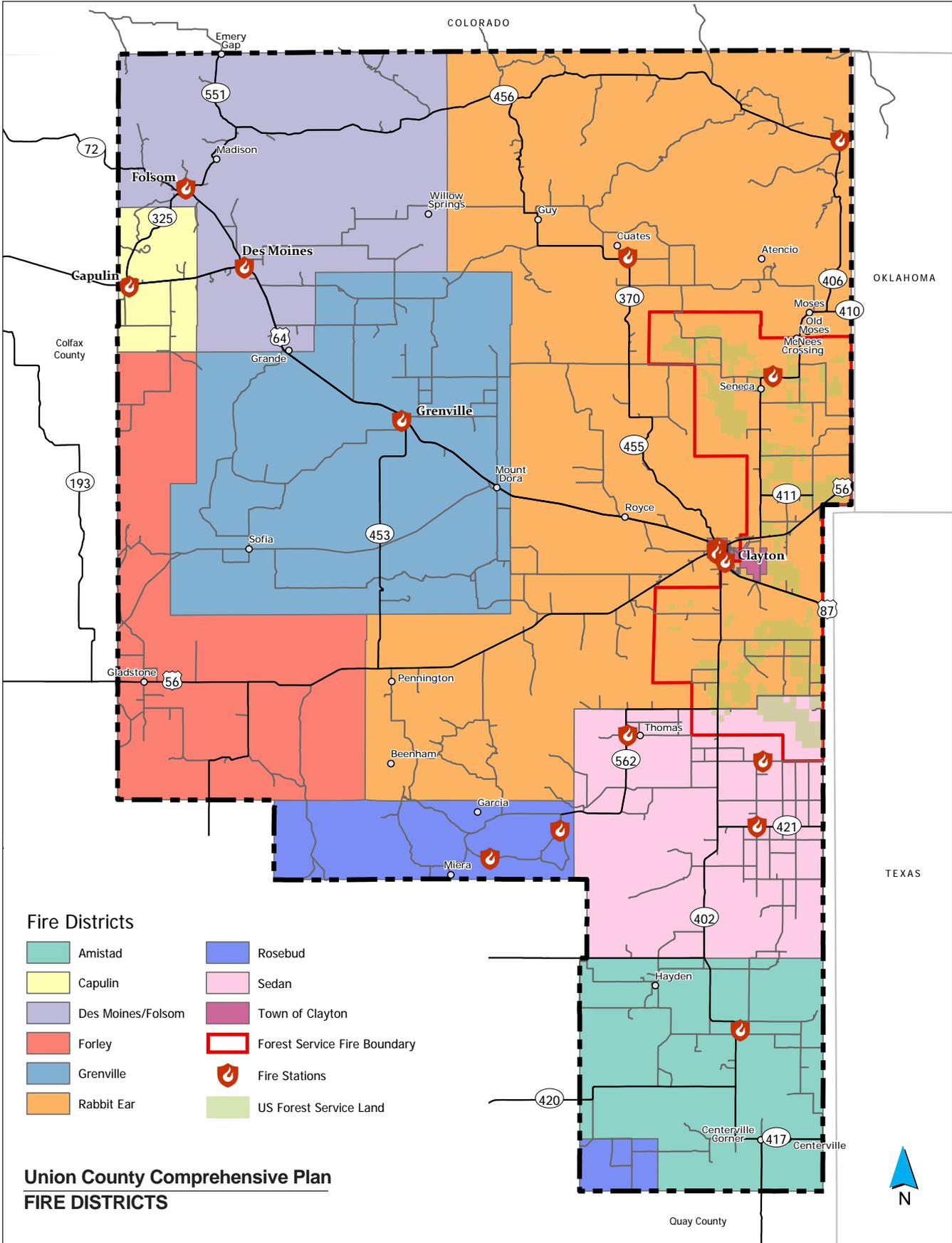
The Union County Courthouse and related buildings are located at 100 Court Street in Clayton. Sitting in the center of Courthouse Square, the Courthouse and related buildings are surrounded by turf and stately mature trees.

The Courthouse building is of red brick construction, with concrete columns and a bold white metal dome. The striking building can be seen for blocks. The Courthouse Building houses the offices for the County Assessor, County Clerk, and County Manager. The County Commission's meeting room is also located in the building.

Union County has plans to expand the Courthouse Complex to incorporate a vacant school building to the north of the existing building. The building will be renovated to accommodate Union County offices.

### Clayton Senior Center

Located at 19 E. Broadway Street, the Clayton Senior Center provides on-site and delivery meal services. All meals are prepared on-site. Activities



available for seniors include exercise classes, card games, billiards, arts and crafts, and occasional out of town trips.

### Des Moines Village Senior Center

The Des Moines Senior Center is located at 415 Des Moines Avenue. It provides congregate hot meals and home-delivered meals on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. The Center has become an important gathering space for area seniors to receive meals and socialize with friends and neighbors. Activities available at the center include: card games, arts and crafts, and board games.

#### *New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department*

Both the Clayton and Des Moines Senior Centers are assisted by the New Mexico Aging and Long-Term Services Department, which oversees the State's Area Agency on Aging (AAA). Union County's senior centers are assisted by the Non-Metro Area Agency on Aging in Public Service Area #3. The Non-Metro AAA offers many services through local providers including:

- Adult Daycare,
- Case Management,
- Chores,
- Nutrition Counseling,
- Congregate Meals,
- Home Delivered Meals,
- Homemaker,
- Respite Care, and
- Transportation.

Tools such as menu planning, service costs, and time and scheduling worksheets are available on the Non-Metro AAA website as is the contact information for the Union County Provider Assistance Specialist.

### A.W. Thompson Memorial Library

The A.W. Thompson Memorial Library is located at 17 Chestnut Street in Clayton and is the only public library in Union County. The Library has a large book and periodical collection, desktop computers, Internet access, and a range of programs for adults and children.

The Library recently upgraded to a fully-integrated on-line system and is researching subscription

options to offer e-book check out to the community. The Library has six desktop computers available for public use and has wifi throughout the facility.

### Union County Fairground Complex

The Union County Fairgrounds Complex is located in Clayton, which owns and maintains the facilities. The Fairground Complex includes a show ring, animal barn, livestock pens, and stables. Community members can use the Fair Arena free of charge. The stables and barn are available for rent. The Fairgrounds Complex is home to a variety of community events.

The largest event is the Union County Fair, which is held annually during the second week in August. The Fair provides an important opportunity for Union County community residents to come together and show pride in their accomplishments.

### Union County Cooperative Extension Service

The Union County Cooperative Extension Service is located at 100 Court Street in Clayton. The Union County Cooperative Extension Service specializes in three categories:

- Farm and Ranch - The Extension Service provides resources to help Union County farmers remain competitive in local, national, and international markets. The Extension Service works to maintain and strengthen programs that address the needs of farmers including information on the latest technology, water management, and emergency preparedness. It also helps to support farmers with brush and weed control and maintaining range management.
- Health and Family Well-Being - The Extension Service provides programs in Home Economics, Food Safety, and Food and Nutrition Education. These programs are geared to help the community improve family and leadership skills, financial literacy, healthy eating, and food management.
- 4-H Youth Development - Union County has a robust 4-H program. 4-H is more than just agricultural education; programs are varied and help young people, along with adult

volunteers, to become self-directed, productive citizens.

### Clayton Livestock Research Center

The Clayton Livestock Research Center is located at 15 NMSU Lane, approximately six miles east of Clayton. It is managed by NMSU and provides a tremendous resource for Union County ranchers.

During the 1970s, cattlemen from across New Mexico promoted the need for this type of research facility. In 1972, the New Mexico State Legislature appropriated funds for the construction and operation of the Research Center. A special use permit was approved by the Cibola National Forest in 1973 and 1975 for the construction on 320 acres of the Kiowa National Grassland within its jurisdiction. Construction on the Research Center began in 1975 and construction of the feedmill was completed in 1978.

The Research Center contains 48 pens that feed 940 head of cattle, 32 individual feeding studies, a processing barn, 24 sort pens, and 120 acres under center-pivot irrigation system. The Research Center is used for NMSU undergraduates and graduate students that conduct research on a variety of topics. This includes shipping protocols



Clayton Livestock Research Center.

for cattle, particularly evaluating the health and performance of newly received cattle and nutrition and management from feedlot to slaughter. Other research involves irrigated pastures and native grasslands, including grazing and stocking densities on locoweed-infested pastures.



Clayton Livestock Research Center.

## 8.4 OUTDOOR RECREATION

Union County contains beautiful landscapes and opportunities for interesting and unique outdoor recreation activities in areas managed and maintained by New Mexico State Parks, New Mexico Game and Fish, National Parks Service, and the US Forest Service. These outdoor recreation areas are highlighted in detail in Chapter 4: Economic Development as they provide important economic opportunities to draw visitors into Union County. These parks and outdoor recreation sites were identified by community members at public meetings and in the Community Survey as valuable community resources.

### Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways

Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways is located 12 miles north of Clayton. The Lake area includes shaded structures for picnicking, off shore fishing, designated camping areas, and hiking trails. The Trout Derby, one of the most popular community events, is held at Clayton Lake on an annual basis.

Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways is a designated International Dark Sky area. It provides perfect conditions to use the Clayton Lake Observatory, which is a small building with

a retractable roof and a high powered telescope for stargazing. Community volunteers organize stargazing parties at the Clayton Lake Observatory and it is available for private events.

Just outside of the Lake area is the Dinosaur Trackways, which contains over 500 dinosaur tracks from different species. The tracksite is surrounded by a small boardwalk from where visitors can view the tracks up close. The Dinosaur Trackways is a beloved area that provides a strong educational tool to visitors.

### Capulin Volcano National Monument

Capulin Volcano National Monument is located near Des Moines and is surrounded by the Kiowa National Grasslands. Visitors to the volcano can drive or hike to the top, hike along the rim, and view the inside of the volcano. The areas around the volcano are popular for camping and wildlife viewing including birdwatching. The Union County community has hosted running events at Capulin Volcano and continues to enjoy the area for hiking, camping, and other outdoor recreational activities.

### Kiowa National Grasslands

The Kiowa National Grasslands is popular among campers and wildlife viewers. Visitors can drive or hike to Mills Canyon Campground, which sits along the Canadian River. Dispersed camping is also



Clayton Lake.



*Kiowa National Grasslands*

possible in the Grasslands. Camping trips are often organized by the local extension office with 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) for youth and adult groups are also available.

### **Sierra Grande**

The Sierra Grande is part of the State Trust Lands. The Sierra Grande volcano and the grasslands are located near Des Moines and are part of the Raton-Clayton Volcanic Field. The Sierra Grande is an extinct shield volcano that rises 2,000 feet above the plains. The State Land Office has implemented restoration and remediation projects that have enhanced the forest and wildlife in the area. Camping, hiking, and hunting are permitted on State Trust lands with a valid license during hunting season.

### **Stephen M. Bush Memorial Shooting Range**

This shooting range is managed by New Mexico Game and Fish and is located just north of Clayton municipal boundaries in Union County and is 161.5 acres. The range is being built in two phases; Phase 1 will include facilities for rifle, shotgun, and archery shooting and Phase 2 will include skeet and clay shooting ranges areas.

## **8.5 COMMUNITY HEALTH**

Community health focuses on the physical and mental well-being of the people in the County. Individual health can have far-reaching impacts on a community including economic growth, educational achievements, and social and leisure activities. This section looks at the most recent health outcome data for Union County and the medical health services available in the County.

### **County Health Outcomes**

The 2018 annual County Health Rankings report (*County Health Rankings & Roadmaps Program, University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute*) was consulted to further understand community health in Union County. The report illustrates how place affects wellness and longevity by measuring a variety of health indicators. It serves as a tool for communities to pinpoint opportunities for improving overall community health. The report ranks and groups a variety of factors for each county into two summary reports categorized under Health Outcomes and Health Factors. The following summary can assist Union County and public health agencies in determining priorities for expanding and improving Health Outcomes and Health Factors for County residents.

**Health Outcomes**

Union County ranked 6th in overall Health Outcomes as compared to the state average. Health Outcomes are measured by the following two factors:

- Length of Life/Premature Death ('Years of Potential Life Lost' before age 75 per 100,000 population) - Union County ranked 9th in the state for Length of Life/Premature Death health factor and higher than the state average (see Table 8.1). As explained in the County Health Rankings report, Years of Potential Life Lost (YPLL) is a widely used measure of the rate and distribution of premature mortality. Measuring premature mortality, rather than overall mortality, reflects the County Health Rankings' intent to focus attention on deaths that could have been prevented. Premature death is age-adjusted; YPLL emphasizes deaths of younger persons, whereas statistics that include all mortality are dominated by deaths of the elderly. For example, using YPLL-75, a death at age 55 counts twice as much as a death at age 65, and a death at age 35 counts eight times as much as a death at age 70.
- Quality of Life (self-evaluation measure based on how survey participants perceive their quality of life) - Union County ranked 3rd in the Quality of Life health factor as compared to the state average. This includes metrics regarding how residents rated overall health, physical health, mental health, infant mortality, and low birthweight.

TABLE 8.1: HEALTH OUTCOMES		
Years of Potential Life Lost Rate	Union County	New Mexico
Premature death YPLL*	8,500	8,400
Quality of Life		
Poor or Fair Health	20%	21%
Poor Physical Health Days	4.2	4.3
Poor Mental Health Days	3.7	4.0
Low Birthweight	8%	9%

\*Years of Potential Life Lost. Source: County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2018.

**Health Factors**

Union County ranked 7th in overall Health Factors as compared to the state average. Health Factors measures and Union County's ranking are as follows:

- Health Behaviors (14th) - food insecurity, limited access to healthy foods, drug overdose deaths, motor vehicle crash deaths, insufficient sleep.
- Clinical Care (25th) - uninsured residents, medical professionals, preventable hospital stays, mammography screening, flu vaccinations.
- Social and Economic Factors (4th) - education, unemployment, children in poverty, income inequality, children in single-parent households, violent crime, injury deaths, etc.
- Physical Environment (4th) - air pollution, drinking water violations, severe housing problems, driving alone to work, long commute - driving alone.

Table 8.2 provides a summary of Health Behaviors and Clinical Care measures for Union County and compares them to New Mexico. Notable metrics for Union County under each category include:

- Health Behaviors - a higher rate of Alcohol-impaired driving deaths and a higher rate of physical inactivity even though residents have a high degree of access to exercise opportunities.
- Clinical Care - a shortage of primary care physicians and a lower rate of individuals getting flu vaccines than the New Mexico county average.
- Social and Economic Factors - nearly double the rate of individuals in social associations and a much lower rate of violent crime than the New Mexico county average.
- Physical Environment - lower particulate and air pollution and a lower rate of individuals experiencing severe housing problems than the New Mexico county average.

TABLE 8.2: HEALTH FACTORS, 2018		
Health Behaviors	Union County	New Mexico
Adult smoking	15%	17%
Physical inactivity	24%	18%
Alcohol-impaired driving deaths	40%	31%
Access to exercise opportunities	76%	77%
Clinical Care		
Uninsured	104%	13%
Primary care physicians	2,100:1	1,340:1
Preventable hospital stays	70	39
Social and Economic Factors		
Social associations	19.1	8.2
Violent crimes	285	590
Physical Environment		
Air pollution-particulate matter	5.4	6.4
Severe housing problems	10%	18%

Source: County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2018.

### Union County General Hospital

Union County General Hospital (UCGH) is located at 300 Wilson Street in Clayton. UCGH has been serving the residents of Union County in Clayton since 1912 when it began as St. Joseph’s Hospital. Today, UCGH is a full service, acute care facility. It is an integral part of the community and sees patients from the region, including Texas and Oklahoma residents. UCGH is owned by Union County and Community Hospital Corporation operates and manages the facility.

UCGH offers the following medical services:

- Union County Health Center - A hospital-based rural health clinic with four general medical providers and multiple staff. The Clinic is located near the UCGH radiology and hematology labs allowing it to provide patients with same day diagnosis and care.
- Level IV Trauma Center - Provides advanced life support and stabilizes the patient prior to transfer of critical care patients to a higher level trauma center. Level IV Trauma Center elements include basic emergency facilities and staff that can implement advanced trauma support; surgery and critical-care services; and transfer to Level I or Level II trauma centers via flight and ground transport.



Union County General Hospital in Clayton.

In addition to the above, UCGH offers:

- Inpatient and outpatient surgical care;
- Pharmacy;
- Laboratory services;
- Radiology;
- Physical therapy services;
- Respiratory care;
- Sleep study clinic; and
- Home healthcare including skilled nursing and physical therapy.

UCGH participates in the Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program of the New Mexico Department of Health managed by the Office of Primary Care & Rural Health (OPCRH). The OPCRH advocates for quality health care delivery systems for New Mexico residents. Its Small Rural Hospital Improvement Program (SHIP) supports improved systems development and quality management in eligible rural hospitals statewide.

### Tri-County Community Services

Tri-County Community Services is located in Clayton and provides mental and behavioral health care for substance abuse rehabilitation. The Center offers outpatient treatment using a substance abuse counseling approach and trauma-related counseling. Insurance is accepted and a sliding fee scale is available.

### Future of Community Health

The following actions related to community health will support a higher quality of life in Union County:

- UCGH recently secured a location for a new dental office in Clayton and has contracted with a provider. Dental services are expected to arrive by 2020. Currently, there are no dental care options in Union County.
- UCGH will be opening a small satellite office in 2019 in Des Moines. This will provide crucial medical services to the area.
- The State of New Mexico recently closed the only Medicaid office in Union County. Medicaid patients have less access to information and UCGH staff are attempting to fill in the gap, putting a financial strain on UCGH. A part-time Medicaid professional would help Union County recipients understand and apply for their benefits and ensure all patients are prepared for health care costs.
- In 2019, the New Mexico State Legislature passed HB 480, which established the Graduate Medical Education (GME) Expansion Review Board. The purpose of the GME is to develop a strategic plan to recruit and retain doctors to rural areas of New Mexico, particularly in the fields of primary care and psychiatry. The GME will manage the distribution of grants for medical residency training slots to create new and expand existing programs. The goal is to increase the healthcare workforce in New Mexico. The program started with \$200,000 in funding and there is potential to tap into federal matching funds. Union County could benefit from this program and supplement the existing healthcare services provided to residents.

## 8.6 PUBLIC EDUCATION

Rural school districts possess unique strengths and opportunities for students and community members. Students often receive a more personal educational experience in smaller classrooms and enjoy strong community support for school activities. There are three public school districts in Union County; Clayton Municipal Schools, Des Moines Municipal Schools, and Springer Municipal Schools (see Table 8.3).

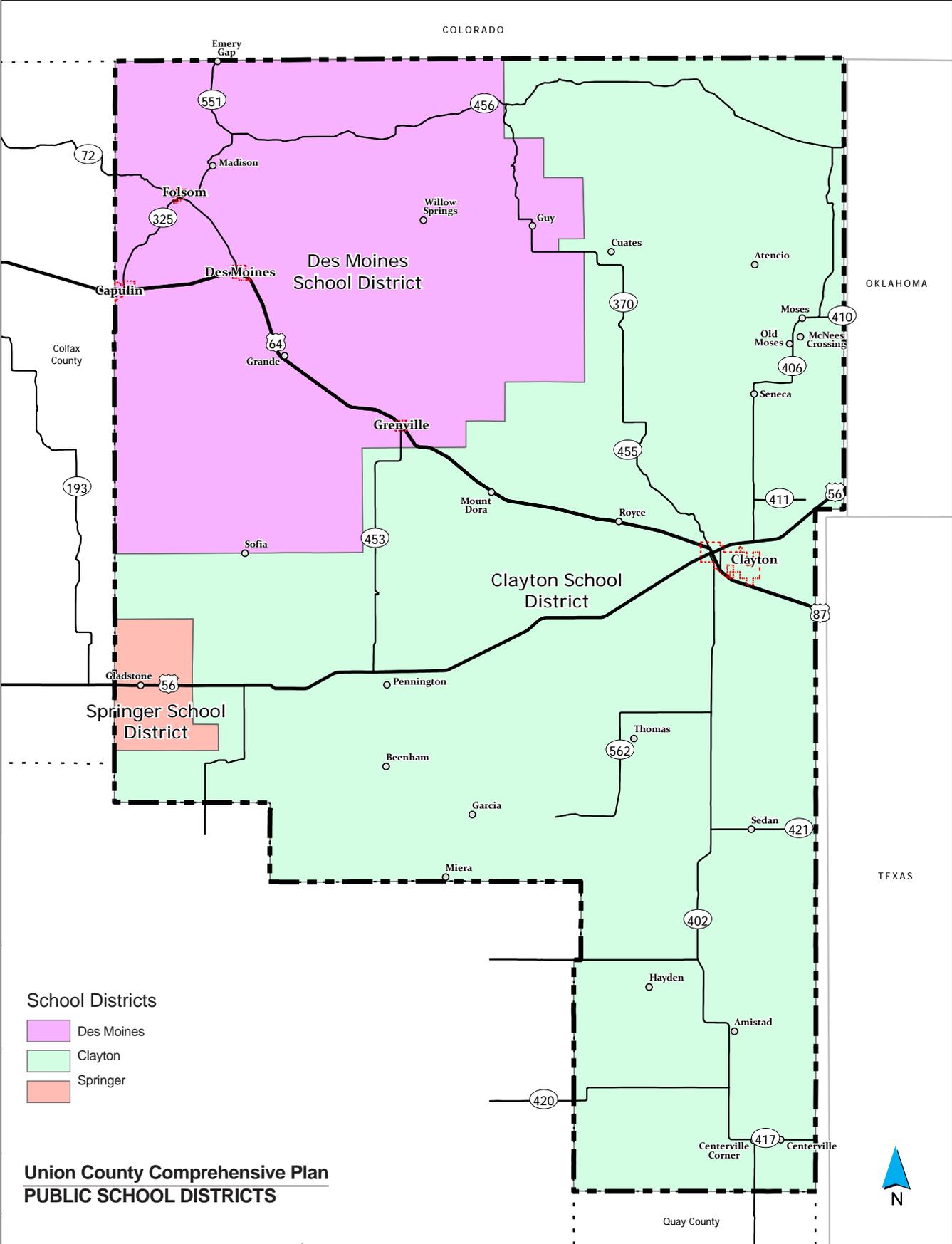
TABLE 8.3: UNION COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS			
District/School	Address	Grade Levels	2019 Enrollment
<b>Clayton Municipal Schools</b>			
Alvis Elementary School	404 Aspen Street	Pre-K - 4th	183
Kiser Elementary School	224 Spruce Street	5th - 6th	60
Clayton Junior High	224 Spruce Street	7th - 8th	72
Clayton High School	323 S. Fifth Street	9th - 12th	125
Total Enrollment	-	-	440
<b>Des Moines Municipal Schools</b>			
Des Moines Elementary School	500 Des Moines Avenue	Pre-K - 6th	48
Des Moines High School	500 Des Moines Avenue	7th - 12th	44
Total Enrollment	-	-	92
<b>Springer Municipal Schools</b>			
Forrester Elementary School	311 Miranda Street	K - 2nd	27
Wilferth Elementary School	311 Miranda Street	3rd - 6th	43
Springer High School	1401 8th Street	7th - 12th	58
Total Enrollment	-	-	128

### Clayton Municipal Schools

The Clayton School District is located in the southeastern section of Union County and is approximately 2,636 square miles serving the communities of Clayton, Sedan, Moses, Amistad, and Texline (see *Public School Districts map, next page*). The District is comprised of four schools, including Clayton High School, Clayton Junior High School, Alvis Elementary, and Kiser Elementary. In 2019, Clayton Municipal Schools had a total enrollment of 440 students.

### Des Moines Municipal Schools

Des Moines Municipal Schools serves communities in the northwest area of Union County, including Des Moines, Folsom, Grenville, Capulin, and surrounding rural communities. The District’s land area is 1,075 square miles within Union County and 69 square miles in Colfax County. Des Moines



- School Districts**
- Des Moines
  - Clayton
  - Springer

**Union County Comprehensive Plan  
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS**



Municipal Schools include Des Moines Elementary School and Des Moines High School. In 2019, the District had a total enrollment of 92 students.

### Springer Municipal Schools

A small portion of the Springer Municipal School District is located in western Union County and includes the community of Gladstone. Springer Municipal Schools contains three schools, including two elementary schools and one high school, which are located in the Town of Springer in Colfax County. In 2019, Springer Municipal Schools had a total enrollment of 128 students.

### Post Secondary Education and Job Training

An ongoing area of discussion is in regard to the desire to attract a satellite community college to Union County. A strong majority of Community Survey respondents (68%) said they would likely attend classes at a community college if one was located in Union County. The primary programs and classes they would believe would best serve youth or adults in Union County included building trades (40%); agribusiness or animal science (16%); and health sciences (11%).

Union County residents currently can take online classes through a variety of New Mexico community colleges and universities. A challenge facing county residents is the availability of Internet access, especially in rural areas and among households with lower incomes. The A.W. Thompson Library in Clayton provides computers and Internet for online classes. Currently, the nearest community colleges are Mesalands in Tucumcari; Clovis Community College in Clovis; and Luna Community College in Las Vegas. The nearest four-year university is Highlands University, also in Las Vegas.

### Mesalands Community College

Mesalands Community College announced in January 2020 that it will be using one double-wide portable building at Clayton High School. The plans are preliminary, but the facility will likely be equipped with computers to allow community members to take online courses from Mesalands with an on-site manager. There may be some in person classes as well.

## 8.7 SOLID WASTE

Union County does not have a regional landfill for household or industrial waste. All waste for Union County, including the four municipalities, is transferred to Texas for disposal. The lack of a nearby landfill discourages clean up of properties since there are no facilities for drop-off nearby. Union County should coordinate with the Town of Clayton on creating a feasibility study for the development of a regional landfill that evaluates alternatives, potential locations, and costs. The findings of the study should be transmitted and coordinated with the New Mexico Environment Department Solid Waste Bureau.

## 8.8 PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and STRATEGIES

### PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES GOAL 1

**Maintain an adequate level of law enforcement services in Union County.**

#### **Objectives:**

- *To ensure the safety and security of Union County residents.*
- *To coordinate with the Town of Clayton Police Department on joint areas of concern, including the Clayton-Union County Jail.*

#### **Public Facilities and Services Strategy 1.1**

Complete a Public Safety Needs Assessment that includes:

- Data collection on past calls for non-emergency and emergency services over the past five years;
- Training and certification needs;
- Technology, equipment, and vehicle needs; and
- A determination of adequate staffing levels to increase the response time to emergency calls.

#### **Public Facilities and Services Strategy 1.2**

In conjunction with the Town of Clayton and the New Mexico Corrections Department, pursue a new Memorandum of Understanding that

addresses the management of the Clayton-Union County Jail.

#### **Public Facilities and Services Strategy 1.3**

Based on the Public Safety Needs Assessment, increase the deputy staffing level in the Union County Sheriff's Department and allocate funding for new equipment and vehicles, as needed. Determine what incentives could be offered to attract more deputies to work in Union County.

#### **Public Facilities and Services Strategy 1.4**

Support on-going training and certification for deputies in the Union County Sheriff's Department. Training should cover mental health and crisis intervention, oversight of legal hemp cultivation, new law enforcement technology, etc.

### **PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES GOAL 2**

#### **Increase fire protection and emergency services in Union County.**

##### **Objectives:**

- *To achieve a better ISO rating for the Union County's eight volunteer fire departments.*
- *To ensure the safety and security of Union County residents.*

#### **Public Facilities and Services Strategy 2.1**

Support on-going training and certification for Union County's volunteer firefighters and EMTs, including hazardous material accidents and wildfires.

#### **Public Facilities and Services Strategy 2.2**

Determine the equipment and facility needs at each of the Union County Fire Stations. Increase the funding level for the purchase of new equipment on a regular basis.

#### **Public Facilities and Services Strategy 2.3**

Pursue funding to improve and expand the Rabbit Ears-1 Fire Station with two new bays and replace the Amistad Fire Station with a new facility.

### **PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES GOAL 3:** **Increase Union County residents' access to public facilities and programs.**

##### **Objectives:**

- *To work with the Town of Clayton and Village of Des Moines on providing more opportunities for Union County residents to receive and participate in educational and social services and programs.*
- *To improve Union County residents' health and quality of life through participation in social and recreational activities.*

#### **Public Facilities and Services Strategy 3.1**

Work with Des Moines and Clayton Municipal School Districts on joint use agreements that allow community use of school recreation facilities.

#### **Public Facilities and Services Strategy 3.2**

In coordination with the Town of Clayton, Program, jointly pursue and allocate funding for the construction of a new multi-generational community center in Clayton that provides a variety of indoor recreational amenities. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Clayton to allow Union County residents to utilize the new facility.

### **PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES GOAL 4:** **Expand Union County residents' access to health care services and clinical care.**

##### **Objectives:**

- *To maintain a high ranking for health outcomes in Union County.*
- *To increase the number of primary care physicians and health care professionals to serve Union County residents.*
- *To lower the rate of uninsured residents in Union County.*
- *To facilitate an on-going dialogue and pursue strategies with Union County General Hospital to increase access to health care services in Union County.*

#### **Public Facilities and Services Strategy 4.1**

Collaborate with Union County General Hospital and other regional health care providers on creating a strategic plan that identifies incentives

to attract and retain health care professionals and specialists in Union County and Clayton. The strategic plan should address behavioral health services, mental health services, dental care, specialty care, Medicaid benefit assistance, and recruitment of graduates from health care programs.

**Public Facilities and Services Strategy 4.2**

Work with Union County General Hospital on developing a public service outreach program on available community health services and preventative health measures to improve health outcomes.

**Public Facilities and Services Strategy 4.3**

Promote medical school mentorship programs that recruit high school seniors from rural New Mexico communities who are interested in the health sciences to train them to be physicians and return to practice medicine in the community.

**PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES GOAL 5**  
**Support equal access to quality education and learning opportunities.**

**Objectives:**

- *To ensure educational programming is available to all Union County residents.*
- *To facilitate a dialogue between the public school districts in Union County and Luna Community College, Mesalands Community College, and Clovis Community College on increasing access to education and dual credit programs for Union County residents.*

**Public Facilities and Services Strategy 5.1**

Participate in annual town halls on educational initiatives that address raising the high school graduation rate and expanding dual credit courses for high school students, access to certificate programs, and online classes. Community partners should include the Town of Clayton and Clayton Municipal Schools; Village of Des Moines and Des Moines Municipal Schools; and Luna Community College, Mesalands Community College, and Clovis Community College.

**Public Facilities and Services Strategy 5.2**

Determine the potential for and the feasibility of a community college satellite being established in Union County or the Town of Clayton.

**Public Facilities and Services Strategy 5.3**

Disseminate information to Union County residents on adult education programs, certificates, and classes (e.g., GED preparation, ESL, computer literacy, work skills training, etc.) offered at Luna Community College, Mesalands Community College, and Clovis Community College.

**PUBLIC SERVICES & FACILITIES GOAL 6**  
**Reduce the solid waste stream generated from Union County and transported to Texas.**

**Objectives:**

- *To encourage Union County residents and businesses to recycle, where feasible, and dispose of trash.*
- *To make trash disposal more convenient for Union County residents.*
- *To reduce the cost of hauling and landfill tipping fees.*

**Public Facilities and Services Strategy 6.1**

Complete a feasibility study for a jointly-owned and operated regional landfill, in coordination with the Town of Clayton, Des Moines, Folsom, Grenville, and other communities within Union County. Coordinate the findings with the New Mexico Environment Department Solid Waste Bureau.

**Public Facilities and Services Strategy 6.2**

Develop solid waste transfer stations in different areas of Union County.

Chapter 9:  
**Hazard Mitigation**



## 9.1 INTRODUCTION

Hazard mitigation is an important area of planning due to dangers to public safety and socio-economic effects of man-made and natural disasters. The Hazard Mitigation element references the types of hazards experienced in Union County and the plans and protocols that are in place to mitigate hazards. This element includes key underlying principles Union County can employ to further the County's hazard planning efforts. The goals, objectives, and strategies presented within this element can be implemented along with other planning mechanisms like ordinances or capital improvement projects to protect lives and property in Union County.

## 9.2 KEY PRINCIPLES of HAZARD MITIGATION

In addition to the efforts and protocols set in place, Union County should consider the following principles of hazard mitigation for long term planning purposes:

- Act before a disaster and utilize the planning process as a key component of the County's hazard mitigation strategies;
- Document existing predicted and future hazards to continue raising awareness amongst communities;
- Advocate for intergovernmental hazard mitigation planning;
- Reinforcement between hazard mitigation and other planning goals;
- Be both strategic and opportunistic, and look for opportunities for change;
- Champions are key to ensuring that hazard mitigation is important to the community and implementation depends on political will;
- Account for all stakeholder values in light of hazard mitigation planning;
- Emphasize multiple objective planning and seize opportunities for collaborative projects;
- Communicate and educate the public on the risks from hazards;

- Recognize that hazard mitigation has long term socio-economic benefits to the community; and
- Utilize resilience-based practices.

## 9.3 FEMA - HAZARD MITIGATION PLANNING

The Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) is in place to coordinate the federal government's role in helping people before, during, and after domestic disasters. With the assistance of federal policies, such as the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, state and local governments may request mitigation grant assistance provided local governments have a FEMA approved mitigation plan in place. A local hazard mitigation plan is a valuable resource that allows for communities to create awareness and work towards a more resilient and defensible future.

Union County secured a grant to create a Hazard Mitigation Plan and has hired a consultant (CDR Maguire) that is knowledgeable in assisting local, county, and state governments in emergency management and disaster recovery preparation. The Union County Hazard Mitigation Plan is anticipated to be complete by mid-2020. The municipalities within Union County will be participating in the planning process and will jointly adopt the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

The planning process for the Hazard Mitigation Plan will include a data collection and analysis phase; a risk and vulnerability assessment; and assessment of the mitigation and disaster recovery capacity of Union County. Development of goals and strategies will depend on the findings of the data collection and assessments. With an adopted Hazard Mitigation Plan, Union County will have access to non-emergency federal funding opportunities through FEMA to fund the County's hazard mitigation and disaster preparedness projects.

The federal government is starting to respond differently to recent disaster events. Traditionally, FEMA's funding focus was to return communities to the way they were before disaster struck. Recent federal legislation, the Disaster Reform Act of

2018, made changes to the funding structure that will reallocate a portion of funding for pre-disaster mitigation assistance through a new program named “Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities.” This new change will make hazard mitigation planning more crucial for communities to have a Hazard Mitigation Plan in place. Once the Hazard Mitigation Plan is adopted, Union County can be proactive when funds become available for pre-disaster mitigation and post-disaster recovery projects.

### Federally-Declared Disasters in Union County

Federally declared disasters are events of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments and where supplemental federal assistance is necessary. The Governor must submit a request for a Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) to the Region VI FEMA office. A PDA assesses the impacted area to determine the extent of the disaster, its impact on individuals and public facilities, and the types of federal assistance needed.

According to FEMA’s Summary of Disaster Declarations and Grants, Union County has had five Federally-Declared Disasters since 1973, including:

- Flooding, 1973
- Drought, 1977
- Severe Storm, 1998
- Fire, 2000
- Hurricane, 2005

### Community Resiliency Through Hazard Mitigation Planning

As Union County faces a variety of hazards, planning for community resiliency is vital to avoid increasing hazard vulnerability. Resiliency is highly dependent on increased awareness of hazards, educating stakeholders, and gaining support for policies and improvements that mitigate those hazards. FEMA advocates that local governments integrate hazard mitigation into their Comprehensive Plans to support the community’s ability to mitigate hazards and recover from

hazards. FEMA recommends building resiliency into the following planning elements:

- Land Use and Future Development - Guide growth and development away from areas with known hazards, and ensure design standards for new and improved construction take hazards into account. Land use policies can build community resiliency by taking information on the location, frequency, and severity of hazards into consideration and set forth recommendations that influence development to mitigate hazard vulnerability.
- Transportation - Adopt design standards that withstand the effects of hazards so that the transportation structure still functions in an event of emergency or disaster. Community resiliency through transportation planning can be accomplished by implementing policies that direct growth away from hazards.
- Housing and Neighborhoods - Focus on policies and programs that strengthen or replace structures identified as vulnerable to hazards. The Housing element should support community resiliency by ensuring the location and design of new or improved housing complies with building codes that keep hazards in mind.
- Economic Development - Hazard mitigation can be integrated into economic development policies by steering commercial and industrial development away from areas that are disrupted by hazards. Resiliency is built by strategically locating businesses where they will not be burdened by hazards. Resiliency is built by strategically locating businesses where they will not be burdened by hazards and building capacity within businesses in order to withstand the effects of hazards.
- Public Facilities and Infrastructure - Employing well thought out strategies for land use will assist in locating facilities and infrastructure out of vulnerable zones. This element also provides opportunities to establish goals and policies in support of mitigation projects. Resiliency is built through the establishment of policies that steer the physical location of public facilities and infrastructure.



*Severe thunderstorm and tornado in Union County, 2017.*

## 9.4 HAZARD MITIGATION and EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Union County has specific hazard mitigation plans and emergency management protocols in place. The County's Department of Emergency Management assists in establishing and implementing hazard mitigation and emergency response activities. The following is a summary of Union County's hazard mitigation efforts and emergency management protocols:

### Severe Weather Plan

The Severe Weather Plan, adopted by the County Commission in 2017, assembles and merges all severe weather procedures and local volunteer personnel across Union County to provide information and guidance to members of the Weather Observation Network. The Plan directs Emergency Management staff and "storm spotters" (trained personnel responsible for subjective determination of the threat level posed by the weather conditions) to follow the tasks and duties outlined. Activities include:

- Training personnel;
- Testing and maintaining weather and communication equipment;
- Paying attention to weather conditions and forecast;

- Advising Union County and Town of Clayton Officials of threatening weather;
- Activation of notification systems;
- Documentation of pre and post-storm weather conditions;
- Identifying the agency responsible for authorizing road and highway closures per State of New Mexico Statute 66-7-11;
- Traffic control;
- Search and rescue; and
- Sheltering, etc.

### Clayton Emergency Route Map

The map indicates emergency streets, roads, and highway routes to be used during emergency situations. It also dictates resource allocation for road maintenance as indicated routes need to be kept safe and accessible. The map is available on the Union County website.

### Emergency Notification System

Union County makes use of CodeRED™ to communicate emergencies, non-related or related to weather, to registered users. CodeRED™ allows Union County to deliver geo-targeted, time-sensitive information to any individual opted into the service using voice, email, and text messaging. Users also have the option to opt into receiving severe weather notifications issued by the National Weather Service.

### Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), was adopted in 2008 by the County Commission and the Fire Marshal, other Town and Village governing bodies, local fire fighting agencies, and state and federal agencies. The goal of the Plan is to enhance human safety and reduce the risk to property and the watershed. CWPP's are developed by communities that are at risk of wildland fire. The Plan identifies and prioritizes federal and non-federal lands for hazardous fuel reduction treatments, outlines methods for fuel reduction, and establishes measures for reducing structural ignite-ability. The Plan gives communities in Union County priority status for United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management hazardous fuels reduction projects.

The Plan also identifies wildland-urban interface (WUI) zones, which are areas where structures and other human development is in the vicinity and/or intermingle with undeveloped wildland and vegetative fuels that pose complex and dangerous situations for firefighters. The CWPP allows communities to establish a localized definition and boundary for the wildland-urban interface. Each community in Union County established a WUI zone, as shown in Table 9.1. In addition, each WUI receives a risk assessment rating. The rating is based on ingress and egress; fuel types; defensible space treatments; fire history; weather; building materials, and roof and siding; distance to available water sources; placement of utilities; lot size, driveway design, and street signs; and topography.

CWPP's are reviewed by the NM-Fire Planning Task Force (NM-FPTF) each year. The NM-FPTF approves all CWPP's that meet the criteria set forth by the Healthy Forest Restoration Act. The NM-Fire Planning Task Force recommends that CWPP's be updated within 5 years of their adoption. The Union County CWPP has exceeded this recommended time frame.

Union County would highly benefit from an updated CWPP. CWPP's provide communities with an opportunity to influence where and how federal agencies implement fuel reduction projects on federal lands, and assist agencies in determining

where federal funds should be distributed on non-federal lands. Many funding options and grants require a jurisdiction to be included in a current and approved CWPP.

TABLE 9.1: WILDLAND - URBAN INTERFACE ZONES		
Community	Radius (miles)	Hazard Assessment
Town of Clayton	5	Low
Folsom	5	Moderate
Sedan	2	Moderate
Amistad	2	Low
Capulin	2	Low
Des Moines	2	Low
Grenville	2	Low
Hayden	2	Low
Mt. Dora	2	Low
Strong City	2	Low
Gladstone	2	Low
Thomas	Entire area	Low
Tramperas Watershed	Entire area	Unavailable
Dry Cimarron Watershed	Entire area	Unavailable

Source: Union County Wildfire Protection Plan, 2008.

### Union County/Town of Clayton Local Emergency Planning Committee

The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) was established under the 1986 Superfund Amendment and Re-Authorization Act. The purpose of the LEPC is to:

- Disseminate information regarding potential chemical hazards, and identify hazardous materials transportation routes and storage sites for the public.
- Ensure compliance with the Community Right-to-Know Act.
- Assist with preparation and implementation of the All Hazards Emergency Operations Plan.
- To promote planning, training, education, and professional development of its members in order to enhance programs that encourage the safety and health of the residents of Union County and the Town of Clayton. This would include conducting educational programs to help the public understand safety risks and community rights.

### Union County Emergency Operations Center Activation Plan

The Union County Emergency Operation Center Activation Plan, adopted in 2017, outlines the operations of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC is opened and staffed only when a emergency or disaster occurs. The EOC establishes the Union County Manager as the Emergency Manager, designates the appropriate agencies to staff the EOC, and mandates the establishment of contingency plans and on-site EOC preparation.

### Agriculture Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Plan

The Agriculture Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Plan (APPRR) was developed by the New Mexico Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the US Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The intent is to coordinate the application of local, state, federal, and volunteer resources in the areas of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery efforts to assist production agriculture in an agricultural emergency pertaining to zoonotic and botanical diseases. The APPRR is consistent with the National Response Plan and National Incident Management System and identifies the roles and responsibilities of the APPRR participants in protecting the public health and agricultural industry of Union County.

An emergency response could be declared because of natural occurrences (snow, rain, wind, drought, or infestation of an insect or plant) or when highly contagious, infectious, or economically devastating disease or agent is confirmed in Union County, in adjacent states, or in an adjacent country. The APPRR utilizes emergency response levels to designate what activities will take place in the event of an imminent or actual threat affecting Union County. Testing of the APPRR is encouraged to ensure effectiveness. The updating of the APPRR can occur in accordance with processes of changes in government structure, exercises performed, or critiques of actual emergency situations by the New Mexico Department of Agriculture working in partnership with local, state, and federal agencies.

## 9.5 UNION COUNTY HAZARDS

To identify the hazards in Union County, the 2018 New Mexico State Hazard Mitigation Plan was consulted. The primary hazards faced by Union County are flooding, wildfires, drought, tornadoes, and severe weather. Union County is also susceptible to the multi-hazard, drought-wildfire-flood cycle. The drought-wildfire-flood cycle include events such as dam failure, drought, flood/flash floods, land slides, and wildland/wildland-urban interface fire. The hazards in Union County are:

### Drought

Union County is regularly affected by drought, similar to all of New Mexico. Drought reduces soil moisture, water, and snow levels and causes disruptions to economic and ecological systems. Droughts are factors in wildfire severity and flash floods. The New Mexico Hazard Mitigation Plan describes drought as being a slow-moving hazard with difficult to define beginning and end points. Socio-economic impacts of drought are especially devastating because Union County's economy is based on dryland farming and ranching. The U.S. Department of Agriculture designated Union County as a natural disaster area due to drought in January 2015. Drought is the leading cause of the drought-wildfire-flood cycle as it creates unhealthy ecosystems characterized by high density vegetation that lead to an increased supply of vegetative fuel for fire, and lead to erosion.

### Flooding

Flooding can occur in Union County year-round, but the threat is particularly present during the July-August monsoon season. The soils in Union County - fine-grained with low filtration rates and high run-off potential - create the conditions for floods, and flash floods to occur. The New Mexico Hazard Mitigation Plan identified that Union County has a 38% probability of a flood occurrence and 100% probability of a flash-flood occurrence. The Plan also states Union County has experienced 26 flash-flood events between 1996 and 2017, and does not participate in the National Flood Insurance Program. The National Flood Insurance Program aims to reduce the impact of flooding on private and public property owners by providing flood insurance and encouraging communities to implement

floodplain management. As a result, flood insurance is unavailable for Union County residents.

### Wildfires

Union County has large expanses of wild grass, pasture/graze land, and forested areas. These areas, unmaintained, create the conditions for wildfires. Lightning is the leading cause of wildfires in Union County. Wind contributes to the danger factor of wildfires as the County experiences periods of high wind that can carry fire to other areas with vegetative fuel. According to the Fire Regime Condition Class in the Union County Wildfire Protection Plan, Union County wildfires contribute to the drought-wildfire-flood cycle as fires damage the soils ability to infiltrate water. In March 2018, a wildland fire burned an estimated 28,000 acres of land in Union County, Colorado, and Oklahoma; 17,000 acres burned in Union County.

### Severe Weather

Union County experiences multiple severe weather occurrences, such as tornadoes and winter storms.

- **Tornadoes** - Union County experiences severe weather, which includes tornadoes. Tornadoes are characterized by rotating columns of air projecting from thunderstorm clouds. Damage associated with tornadoes is caused by accompanying extreme wind pressure and wind-borne debris. A significant tornado occurred in Union County on May 23, 2010; the event is described as a “swarm of tornadoes” by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Weather Service. On August 13, 2016, a tornado was reported near Capulin and another was reported near Capulin Volcano National Monument. Both tornadoes were part of the same thunderstorm system.
- **Winter Storms** - Winter storms in Union County are characterized by heavy snowfall. Union County experiences 10-60 inches of snowfall in a year. Southern Union County averages less than 5 days of snowfall, but the number of days increase in northern Union County up to 20 days.

### Hazardous Materials

The Ports to Plains Corridor (NM 87/US 64) has increased the frequency and amount of freight traveling through the area. More traffic increases the likelihood of vehicular accidents and the potential for hazardous material spills. All accident related calls are tended by local emergency response teams (some are volunteers). It is dangerous for emergency response teams to attend calls for accidents or hazardous waste spills without proper equipment and training. Union County public safety agencies can prepare for accidents related to hazardous materials by continuing to educate the public, raise awareness, develop evacuation and training procedures, and work with state and federal agencies to develop hazard mitigation policies.

### Earthquakes

The northern Union County and southern Colorado area experience seismic activity; although earthquakes have not been major enough to cause alarm. In the 2018 Clayton Civic Center Evaluation Plan, earthquakes were identified as a hazard because of the stress placed on aging buildings by seismic activity. In 2012, a 5.3 magnitude earthquake at a depth of 4 kilometers occurred in Trinidad. Other portions of Union County, like the Town of Clayton area are also affected by earthquakes. In 2002, the Town of Clayton experienced a 3.7 magnitude earthquake at a 5 kilometer depth, an additional one in 2013 with a magnitude of 2.7 and a depth of 4 kilometers was recorded. Earthquakes occur without warning and place people at risk because of vulnerable structures. Seismic risk evaluations and seismic upgraded are recommended as resources allow.

## 9.6 HAZARD MITIGATION GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and STRATEGIES

### HAZARD MITIGATION GOAL 1

#### Reduce Union County's vulnerability to natural and man-made hazards.

##### **Objectives:**

- To provide residents with adequate warning for major hazards, including flooding, severe weather, and tornadoes.
- To develop greater capability and capacity to mitigate hazards and experience a shorter recovery time after hazards have occurred.
- To increase emergency preparedness and response during hazard events.
- To coordinate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on mitigating natural hazards.
- To coordinate with the New Mexico Department of Agriculture and other state and federal agencies on agricultural emergencies.

##### **Hazard Mitigation Strategy 1.1**

Complete the ongoing Hazard Mitigation Plan in compliance with FEMA requirements. The Hazard Mitigation Plan should include, but not be limited to:

- Creating a multi-jurisdictional planning team comprised of representatives from Union County and the four municipalities;
- Creating the project scope, schedule, and defining responsibilities;
- Creating an outreach strategy to engage community stakeholders;
- Determining local capabilities;
- Conducting a risk assessment to determine the potential impacts of hazards to the people, economy, and built and natural environments;
- Creating a mitigation strategy of goals, actions, and action plan for reducing the potential losses identified in the risk assessment;

- Adoption by Union County and the four municipalities of Clayton, Des Moines, Folsom, and Grenville; and
- Ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and updating the Hazard Mitigation Plan on a five year basis.

##### **Hazard Mitigation Strategy 1.2**

Install backup generators at key facilities and shelters to protect against power loss during severe storms and other hazard events.

##### **Hazard Mitigation Strategy 1.3**

Provide adequate accommodations during hazard events. This should include food and water, medical care, and accommodations for domestic animals.

##### **Hazard Mitigation Strategy 1.4**

Facilitate on-going collaboration between Union County, State of New Mexico, FEMA, and the four municipalities of Clayton, Des Moines, Folsom, and Grenville on mitigating natural hazards.

##### **Hazardous Mitigation Strategy 1.5**

Facilitate on-going collaboration between Union County, New Mexico Department of Agriculture, and the US Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to maintain the ongoing effectiveness of the Agricultural Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Plan.

### HAZARD MITIGATION GOAL 2

#### Reduce Union County's vulnerability to wildfires.

##### **Objectives:**

- To coordinate with the Town of Clayton, Village of Des Moines, Village of Folsom, Village of Grenville, and other communities within Union County on fuel reduction activities in the WUI areas.
- To educate residents on best practices in wildfire prevention.
- To participate in organizations dedicated to preventing urban wildfires.

##### **Hazard Mitigation Strategy 2.1**

Develop a public information program on wildfire mitigation, including:

- Creating buffer zones and removing

combustible materials around homes and businesses; and

- Creating an emergency supply kit (e.g., water, food, batteries, flashlights, first aid kit, phone chargers, etc).

### **Hazard Mitigation Strategy 2.2**

Develop a program for weed and brush removal along natural waterways and WUI zones at risk for wildfires.

## **HAZARD MITIGATION GOAL 3**

**Minimize Union County’s vulnerability to and impact from flooding.**

### **Objectives:**

- *To develop greater capability and capacity to mitigate flooding and flash floods.*
- *To strive for a shorter recovery time after flooding has occurred.*

### **Hazard Mitigation Strategy 3.1**

Increase the number of rainwater detention basins and drainage conveyance structures to protect against future floods.

### **Hazard Mitigation Strategy 3.2**

Provide ongoing collaboration between Union County, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and the New Mexico Department of Homeland Safety and Emergency Management on mitigating flood hazards.

### **Hazard Mitigation Strategy 3.3**

Once the Hazard Mitigation Plan is complete, participate in and remain compliant with the National Flood Insurance Program.

## **HAZARD MITIGATION GOAL 4**

**Improve Union County’s capacity to respond to hazardous spills and accidents on US 87 (Ports to Plains Corridor).**

### **Objectives:**

- *To develop a rapid and coordinated response to hazardous spills and accidents.*
- *To ensure adequate equipment and staffing levels trained in specialized emergency response.*

### **Hazard Mitigation Strategy 4.1**

Develop a plan for responding to hazardous spills and removals, and accidents along US 87 (Ports to Plains Corridor).

### **Hazard Mitigation Strategy 4.2**

Provide adequate equipment and ongoing training needed to respond to hazardous spills and accidents.

### **Hazard Mitigation Strategy 4.3**

Work with the Port of Entry in Clayton to determine when large volumes of hazardous materials are being transported through Union County.

Chapter 10:  
**Implementation**



## 10.1 INTRODUCTION

Implementation is a critical component in long range planning. Without a strong commitment to implementation, the process to develop the Comprehensive Plan will have been a fruitless effort. To ensure the success and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan, it is recommended that the County Commission create a rigorous system of checks and balances that includes:

- Appointing a subcommittee of the County Commission, along with County staff, to oversee the progress made towards implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and tasks that include:
  - ✓ Tracking the completion of the implementation strategies by Plan element and preparing progress reports to the County Commission;
  - ✓ Preparing recommendations for amendments to the Comprehensive Plan as needed;
  - ✓ Monitoring changed conditions in the community that may have an impact on the Comprehensive Plan;
  - ✓ Staying abreast of funding sources and programs that could be utilized for implementation of capital improvements;
  - ✓ Monitoring state legislation and plans in order to ensure consistency with state policy and programs; and
  - ✓ Representing Union County in regional water planning, transportation planning, and economic development initiatives.
- Developing and maintaining partnerships with other public and private sector entities to accomplish the implementation strategies.
- Linking Union County's ICIP to the implementation strategies and priorities identified in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Basing future grant applications on implementation strategies and priorities identified in the Comprehensive Plan.

## 10.2 IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Each of the elements in this Comprehensive Plan contain a series of goals, objectives, and strategies. The implementation tables starting on the next page provide the complete list of strategies contained in the Comprehensive Plan. The strategies are organized by Plan element and are supplemented by projected time frames for completion and responsible party or partnership. For more detail on each of the strategies or the goals and objectives, refer back to the specific Plan element.

- 2020-2023 (short);
- 2024-2027 (medium);
- 2028-2035 (long);
- On-going (no end date).

The implementation program acknowledges Union County's fiscal and staff limitations. As such, the time frames presented in the implementation tables are dependent on available funding, staff resources, and the ability of Union County to engage in meaningful partnerships with other local and regional entities. It should be understood that the time frames may require adjustment over time.

CHAPTER 3: LAND USE - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE		
Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
<b>Strategy 3.1.1:</b> Promote new growth and development in key locations within unincorporated Union County utilizing the Future Land Use Scenario and within the general parameters of low density residential development in proximity to the existing municipalities; commercial development along key highway corridors, intersections, and in proximity to the railroad; industrial development in areas appropriate for energy generation; hospitality and lodging in proximity to Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways and Capulin Volcano National Monument; etc.	On-going	Union County
<b>Strategy 3.1.2:</b> Create an inventory of available properties for commercial and/or industrial development. Include County-owned excess properties. Once complete, promote the inventory to generate interest from builders and developers.	2020-2023	Union County
<b>Strategy 3.1.3:</b> Engage with the owners of vacant properties shown on the Future Land Use Scenario to determine their potential interest in making their property available for development.	2020-2023	Union County
<b>Strategy 3.1.4:</b> Develop and incorporate criteria into development standards that address site planning; access to the County's roadway system; lighting; and buffering between non-compatible industrial or heavy commercial uses and residential use.	2028-2035	Union County
<b>Strategy 3.2.1:</b> Adopt a "Right to Farm" ordinance to address and protect the property right of existing agricultural producers operating within generally accepted agricultural practices and in conformity with federal, state, and local laws from potential nuisance suits.	2020-2023	Union County
<b>Strategy 3.2.2:</b> Continue to work with and encourage ranchers to incorporate the best practices in rangeland management, regenerative agriculture, and cattle processing researched and recommended by the Clayton Livestock Research Center.	On-going	Union County Extension Office
<b>Strategy 3.2.3:</b> Establish an agricultural committee comprised of agricultural producers that will be tasked with the review of new land use regulations that may impact their operations.	On-going	Soil & Water Conservation District
<b>Strategy 3.3.1:</b> Sponsor and promote community clean-up events on a biannual basis where residents can dispose of trash in a safe and sustainable manner in designated collection sites. Rotate the collection sites between different areas of Union County.	2024-2027	Union County
<b>Strategy 3.3.2:</b> Develop a Nuisance Ordinance for the unincorporated areas of Union County that prohibits the maintenance or improper storage of junked or abandoned vehicles, parts, appliances, etc., dilapidated structures, and overgrown vegetation. The ordinance should address the list of prohibited items, notification procedures to the property owner, and civil penalties and remedies for non-compliance.	2028-2035	Union County & unincorporated villages
<b>Strategy 3.3.3:</b> Create a brand for Union County and incorporate the brand into community gateways at the major entries welcoming visitors to the County, as designated on the Future Land Use Scenario. The five gateway locations are located on the west Union County line at US 64, US 56, and NM 72; and the east Union County line at US 87 and NM 456.	2024-2027	Union County, Chamber of Commerce, & NMDOT
<b>Strategy 3.3.4:</b> As new renewable energy projects come to fruition, incorporate criteria that considers the impact of scenic quality in the County's design review process.	2020-2023	Union County
<b>Strategy 3.3.5:</b> Consider adopting a sign ordinance that regulates billboards and other signage along the major highways within Union County.	2024-2027	Union County
<b>Strategy 3.3.6:</b> Provide adequate staffing levels to enforce Union County ordinances related to dilapidated structures, abandoned/inoperable vehicles, junk, and overgrown vegetation.	2020-2023	Union County

<b>CHAPTER 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE</b>		
<b>Implementation Strategies</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Responsible Entity</b>
<b>Strategy 4.1.1:</b> Update the Union County Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) ordinance to reflect current priorities and identify targeted business clusters for establishment or expansion in Union County. The LEDA should include, but not be limited to: 1) Setting clear goals and strategies that can assist Union County in developing a roadmap for future economic development; 2) Appointing or convening an Economic Development Administrator or Committee that is charged with advising Union County on economic development decisions and potential LEDA projects; 3) Identifying targeted industries and/or industry clusters that would benefit Union County and help focus the County's economic development recruitment efforts and land use priorities; 4) Encouraging projects that utilize locally grown agricultural products; renewable energy and transmission; tourism support services and facilities; food manufacturing; value-added agriculture; warehousing and distribution; trucking; etc.; 5) Employing a cost/benefit analysis that illustrates the impact of the project on Union County and the recoup time for Union County's investment; and 6) Imposing clawback provisions that provide Union County with the ability to recoup public investment in projects that do not meet job creation requirements.	2024-2027	Union County
<b>Strategy 4.1.2:</b> Identify and recruit businesses related and complementary to existing and targeted business clusters, including renewable energy and energy transmission; tourism support services and facilities; food manufacturing; value-added agriculture; greenhouses; warehousing and distribution; and trucking.	On-going	Northeast Economic Development Organization & Union County Community Development Corp.
<b>Strategy 4.1.3:</b> Work with the New Mexico Economic Development Department, local municipalities, and employers on seeking workforce investment funding.	On-going	Northeast Economic Development Organization & Union County Community Development Corp.
<b>Strategy 4.1.4:</b> In conjunction with the Town of Clayton, complete a study that identifies the components of the "Rabbit Ears Small Business Incubator", utilizing locally grown, created, or manufactured products and services. Determine the interest of Union County residents in participating in the business incubator.	2024-2027	Union County & Town of Clayton
<b>Strategy 4.1.5:</b> Work with local banks and regional economic development organizations to offer access to capital to small businesses through a revolving-loan fund.	2024-2027	Union County
<b>Strategy 4.2.1:</b> Work with the NMSU Union County Extension Office, New Mexico Department of Agriculture, and local farmers on advancing the technical knowledge of hemp farming and production in Union County.	2024-2027	Union County & Union County Extension Office
<b>Strategy 4.2.2:</b> Develop a recruitment strategy for a hemp processing company to locate at the Clayton Business Park. Provide information on available tax incentives; LEDA funds; USDA Rural Development Funds; Job Training Incentive Program funds; and the available workforce.	2024-2027	Union County & Town of Clayton
<b>Strategy 4.2.3:</b> Identify Union County farmers that would be interested in farming hops and New Mexico brewers that would utilize the crops.	2028-2035	Union County Extension Office
<b>Strategy 4.2.4:</b> Determine the interest of Union County farmers in growing crops for a biofuel processing plant.	2028-2035	Union County Extension Office
<b>Strategy 4.2.5:</b> Utilize the technical expertise of the New Mexico Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program and NMSU's Clayton Livestock Research Center on best practices in agricultural and rangeland management.	On-going	Union County Extension Office

CHAPTER 4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)		
Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
<b>Strategy 4.3.1:</b> Recruit the development of additional lodging and hospitality facilities in the areas around Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways and Capulin Volcano National Monument, as shown in the Future Land Use Scenario.	On-going	Union County Community Development Corp.
<b>Strategy 4.3.2:</b> In collaboration with the Clayton/Union County Chamber of Commerce, New Mexico State Parks, and the New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Department, create a targeted tourism marketing campaign that promotes Union County as the Northeast New Mexico destination for outdoor recreation opportunities, and cultural and historic attractions. Utilize social media, print media, and television to promote Union County.	2020-2023	Union County & Chamber of Commerce
<b>Strategy 4.3.3:</b> Co-sponsor community events with the Town of Clayton, Village of Des Moines, and Village of Folsom that highlight the unique attributes of the region.	2028-2035	Union County
<b>Strategy 4.3.4:</b> Recruit new businesses that support the tourism industry, including gas stations, restaurants, rest stops, hotels/motels, and recreation equipment to locate within Union County.	On-going	Union County Community Development Corp.
<b>Strategy 4.3.5:</b> Support Folsom Village on applying for economic development funding and technical support from New Mexico MainStreet.	2020-2023	Union County
<b>Strategy 4.4.1:</b> In coordination with the Town of Clayton, public school districts, and regional post secondary educational institutions, determine the feasibility of a locating a satellite community college in Union County that provides training for jobs in renewable energy, value-added agriculture, healthcare, and building trades.	2020-2023	Union County, Town of Clayton, Clayton Municipal Schools, & Des Moines Municipal Schools
<b>Strategy 4.4.2:</b> Provide information to Union County residents on the available online education courses from Mesalands Community College, Luna Community College, and Clovis Community College.	2020-2023	Union County & A.W. Thompson Library
<b>Strategy 4.5.1:</b> In conjunction with the Town of Clayton, support and jointly apply for funding to improve the Clayton Business Park, including extending natural gas to the Park and roadway and infrastructure improvements, as needed.	2028-2035	Union County & Town of Clayton
<b>Strategy 4.5.2:</b> In conjunction with the Town of Clayton, promote the Clayton Business Park to renewable energy, food manufacturing, warehousing and distribution companies, etc. that may be interested in locating to Union County.	On-going	Union County Community Development Corp.
<b>Strategy 4.5.3:</b> Create an incentive package for businesses, industries, and processing plants interested in locating at the Clayton Business Park. Incentives may include property tax abatement, Industrial Revenue Bonds, LEDA funds, etc.	2028-2035	Union County & Town of Clayton

CHAPTER 5: HOUSING - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE		
Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
<p><b>Strategy 5.1.1:</b> Complete and submit an application to the New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) to fund the creation of an Affordable Housing Plan that complies with the New Mexico Affordable Housing Act, as amended. The Affordable Housing Plan should be accompanied by an Affordable Housing Ordinance. As part of this strategy, determine the feasibility of developing a joint Affordable Housing Plan with the Town of Clayton. The Affordable Housing Plan should contain at a minimum: 1) A comprehensive community and housing profile that includes demographic characteristics, household characteristics, economic profile, and local housing market conditions; 2) Assessment of existing and projected housing needs by Average Median Income (AMI) levels, including for-sale housing, rental housing, and housing for special needs populations; 3) Assessment of existing housing conditions and quantification of the existing housing stock that is vacant and/or have major rehabilitation needs; 4) Analysis and proposed solutions to the regulatory (land use development codes), non-regulatory (fees, environmental, land availability, financial), and policy constraints to affordable housing; 5) Goals, policies, and quantifiable objectives to meet affordable housing needs (rental and owner-occupied) within a planning horizon of five years; and 6) Public participation and input.</p>	2020-2023	Union County, Eastern Plains Council of Governments, Town of Clayton, & unincorporated villages
<p><b>Strategy 5.1.2:</b> In conjunction with developing an Affordable Housing Plan, identify incentives for the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing that may include: 1) Create an inventory of County-owned land deemed appropriate for donation to an affordable housing developer of rental and for-sale units; 2) Long term leases or discounts on County-owned land; 3) Waiver or reduction of County property tax; and 4) Payment for on- and/or off-site infrastructure improvements.</p>	2020-2023	Union County, Eastern Plains Council of Governments, Town of Clayton, & unincorporated villages
<p><b>Strategy 5.1.3:</b> Develop an educational program that provides information on: 1) Available affordable housing programs, credit counseling, first time home buyer programs; 2) Rehabilitation and maintenance assistance programs for very low income homeowners, seniors, and veterans; 3) Down payment and closing cost assistance; and 4) Referrals to local MFA-approved lenders.</p>	2020-2023	Union County & unincorporated villages
<p><b>Strategy 5.1.4:</b> Identify an appropriate entity that will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Union County Affordable Housing Plan. As part of this strategy, the responsible entity should attend MFA's training and technical assistance programs.</p>	2020-2023	Union County & Town of Clayton
<p><b>Strategy 5.2.1:</b> Identify and acquire through condemnation, vacant and abandoned properties that are suitable for redevelopment and can be later conveyed by Union County at reduced or donated values.</p>	On-going	Union County & unincorporated villages
<p><b>Strategy 5.2.2:</b> Once an Affordable Housing Plan has been completed by Union County, seek partnerships with private or non-profit developers to rehabilitate vacant and abandoned housing for market rate and affordable housing.</p>	2024-2027	Union County
<p><b>Strategy 5.2.3:</b> Develop a nuisance ordinance that addresses dangerous buildings, abandoned vehicles, overgrown vegetation, and storage of junk on residential properties. The ordinance should include definitions, inspection and enforcement procedures, civil penalties for non-compliance, and the ability for Union County to lien properties.</p>	2028-2035	Union County & unincorporated villages

CHAPTER 6: WATER RESOURCES AND DRAINAGE - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE		
Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
<b>Strategy 6.1.1:</b> Create a 40-Year Water Plan for Union County that complies with the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer (NMOSE) requirements and determines current water use and future water demand in Union County.	2028-2035	Union County
<b>Strategy 6.1.2:</b> Continue the monitoring of groundwater levels in Union County through the Hydrogeology Project.	On-going	Union County & Soil & Water Conservation District
<b>Strategy 6.2.1:</b> Develop a water conservation program through the reduction of water waste; public education; conservation incentives; water audits; and subdivision regulations.	2028-2035	Union County & unincorporated villages
<b>Strategy 6.2.2:</b> Amend the Union County Subdivision Ordinance to require new developments to provide proof of water rights, available water supply, and a study that shows the impact to the groundwater supply.	2028-2035	Union County
<b>Strategy 6.3.1:</b> Develop a Liquid Waste Ordinance for the unincorporated areas of Union County that requires the discharge of untreated liquid waste into: 1) An enclosed system permitted by the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED); 2) A liquid waste treatment system permitted by the NMED; or 3) A public sanitary sewer system. The ordinance should also include enforcement and citation procedures for non-permitted or non-compliant liquid waste systems, and approval for installation of liquid waste systems.	2028-2035	Union County
<b>Strategy 6.3.2:</b> Develop a Hazardous Materials Ordinance for the unincorporated areas of Union County that prohibits the maintenance or storage of hazardous materials, and identifies drop-off locations for the proper disposal of hazardous materials.	2028-2035	Union County
<b>Strategy 6.3.3:</b> Create an educational program on groundwater protection that covers liquid waste and hazardous materials. This should include information on required setbacks between septic tanks and wells, required clearances between the bottom of trenches and groundwater, potential waterborne illnesses resulting from contamination, and financial assistance programs.	2024-2027	Union County & Soil & Water Conservation District
<b>Strategy 6.4.1:</b> Create a stormwater design standard that establishes criteria to ensure drainage is handled properly with new development.	2028-2035	Union County
<b>Strategy 6.4.2:</b> Provide maintenance and improvements to existing drainage channels and other pertinent storm drainage conveyances.	On-going	Union County
<b>Strategy 6.4.3:</b> Collaborate with the Playa Lakes Joint Venture and private landowners on future playa restoration projects.	On-going	Union County, Playa Lakes Joint Venture, & private landowners
<b>Strategy 6.4.4:</b> In consultation with the NMOSE District 7, create a dam maintenance and improvement plan that prioritizes improvements to dams that have been deemed to be in poor condition by the Dam Safety Bureau.	2028-2035	Union County

CHAPTER 7: TRANSPORTATION - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE		
Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
<b>Strategy 7.1.1:</b> Create an Asset Management Plan for the Union County roadway system network. Apply for funding to the New Mexico Finance Authority. The Asset Management Plan should include, but not be limited to: 1) A Pavement Management Program with identification of all street assets, including pavement condition; 2) Cost projections for future needs; 3) Funding strategies; and 4) Prioritize projects based on roadway condition, traffic counts, safety considerations, current and proposed land use, and public support.	2028-2035	Union County
<b>Strategy 7.1.2:</b> Create a Freight Plan to determine freight volumes, origins and destinations; and identifies and prioritizes improvements to roads, rail crossings, and bridges to advance Union County's position as a transportation hub in Northeast New Mexico.	2028-2035	Union County & NMDOT
<b>Strategy 7.1.3:</b> Evaluate the existing functional classifications of Union County roadways and determine whether revisions are needed based on capacity, travel speeds, and adjacent land use and development. Coordinate these findings with Northeastern Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NERTPO) and NMDOT.	2028-2035	Union County
<b>Strategy 7.1.4:</b> Work with NMDOT on improving and expanding services at rest stops, including the Sierra Grande Rest Area, along US 87/64.	2024-2027	Union County, Northeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization, & NMDOT
<b>Strategy 7.2.1:</b> In consultation with NERTPO and NMDOT, determine and plan for new roadways to accommodate existing demand and future growth in Union County. As new roadways are planned, complete the necessary acquisition of rights-of-way, environmental analyses, and engineering design.	On-going	Union County, Northeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization, & NMDOT
<b>Strategy 7.2.2:</b> Determine the feasibility of adding bicycle lanes within US 87/64 and NM 370 rights-of-way or constructing adjacent multi-use trails, as part of the designated Recreation Loops identified on the Future Land Use Scenario.	2028-2035	Union County, Northeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization, & NMDOT
<b>Strategy 7.2.3:</b> Pursue NMDOT funding available through the Local Government Road Fund, Municipal Arterial Program, Cooperative Projects, Safety Projects, Bicycle/Pedestrian/Equestrian Program (BPE), Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and Recreational Trails Program (RTP).	On-going	Union County, Northeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization, & NMDOT
<b>Strategy 7.3.1:</b> In coordination with the Golden Spread Rural Frontier Express, seek additional state or federal funding for enhancements to and expansion of local and regional transit service to meet current and future mobility needs in the unincorporated areas of Union County.	On-going	Union County & Golden Spread Rural Frontier Express
<b>Strategy 7.3.2:</b> Expand transit to serve tourists seeking to visit Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways, Capulin Volcano National Monument, and other regional attractions.	On-going	Union County, Golden Spread Rural Frontier Express, & Town of Clayton
<b>Strategy 7.4.1:</b> Work with the Clayton-Union County Chamber of Commerce to identify existing and future businesses that may benefit from and desire airport services. Begin targeted promotional advertisements and activities, as needed.	2024-2027	Union County & Chamber of Commerce

CHAPTER 8: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE		
Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
<b>Strategy 8.1.1:</b> Complete a Public Safety Needs Assessment that includes: 1) Data collection on past calls for non-emergency and emergency services over the past five years; 2) Training and certification needs; 3) Technology, equipment, and vehicle needs; and 4) A determination of adequate staffing levels to decrease the response time to emergency calls.	2020-2023	Union County & Union County Sheriff Dept.
<b>Strategy 8.1.2:</b> In conjunction with the Town of Clayton and the New Mexico Corrections Department, pursue a new Memorandum of Understanding that addresses the management of the Clayton-Union County Jail.	2020-2023	Union County, Town of Clayton, & NM Dept. of Corrections
<b>Strategy 8.1.3:</b> Based on the Public Safety Needs Assessment, increase the deputy staffing level in the Union County Sheriff's Department and allocate funding for new equipment and vehicles, as needed. Determine what incentives could be offered to attract more deputies to work in Union County.	2020-2023	Union County & Union County Sheriff Dept.
<b>Strategy 8.1.4:</b> Support on-going training and certification for deputies in the Union County Sheriff's Department. Training should cover mental health and crisis intervention, oversight of legal hemp cultivation, new law enforcement technology, etc.	On-going	Union County & Union County Sheriff Dept.
<b>Strategy 8.2.1:</b> Support on-going training and certification for Union County's volunteer firefighters and EMTs, including hazardous material accidents and wildfires.	On-going	Union County, Union County Emergency Manager, & Fire Chiefs
<b>Strategy 8.2.2:</b> Determine the equipment and facility needs at each of the Union County Fire Stations. Increase the funding level for the purchase of new equipment on a regular basis.	On-going	Union County & Fire Chiefs
<b>Strategy 8.2.3:</b> Pursue funding to improve and expand the Rabbit Ears-1 Fire Station with two new bays and replace the Amistad Fire Station with a new facility.	2024-2027	Union County & Fire Chiefs
<b>Strategy 8.3.1:</b> Work with Des Moines and Clayton Municipal School Districts on joint use agreements that allow community use of school recreation facilities.	2020-2023	Union County, Des Moines & Clayton Municipal School Districts
<b>Strategy 8.3.2:</b> In coordination with the Town of Clayton, program, jointly pursue, and allocate funding for the construction of a new multi-generational community center in Clayton that provides a variety of indoor recreational amenities. Develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Clayton to allow Union County residents to utilize the new facility.	2028-2035	Union County & Town of Clayton
<b>Strategy 8.4.1:</b> Collaborate with Union County General Hospital and other regional health care providers on creating a strategic plan that identifies incentives to attract and retain health care professionals and specialists in Union County and Clayton. The strategic plan should address behavioral health services, mental health services, dental care, specialty care, Medicaid benefit assistance, and recruitment of graduates from health care programs.	2024-2027	Union County, Union County General Hospital, & Town of Clayton
<b>Strategy 8.4.2:</b> Work with Union County General Hospital on developing a public service outreach program on available community health services and preventative health measures to improve health outcomes.	2024-2027	Union County & Union County General Hospital
<b>Strategy 8.4.3:</b> Promote medical school mentorship programs that recruit high school seniors from rural New Mexico communities who are interested in the health sciences to train them to be physicians and return to practice medicine in the community.	2024-2027	Union County, Clayton Municipal Schools, Des Moines Municipal Schools, & Union County General Hospital

CHAPTER 8: PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (CONTINUED)		
Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
<b>Strategy 8.5.1:</b> Participate in annual town halls on educational initiatives that address raising the high school graduation rate and expanding dual credit courses for high school students, access to certificate programs, and online classes. Community partners should include the Town of Clayton and Clayton Municipal Schools; Village of Des Moines and Des Moines Municipal Schools; and Luna Community College, Mesalands Community College, and Clovis Community College.	On-going	Union County, Clayton Municipal Schools, Des Moines Municipal Schools, Town of Clayton, Village of Des Moines, & regional community colleges
<b>Strategy 8.5.2:</b> Determine the potential for and the feasibility of a community college satellite being established in Union County or the Town of Clayton.	2020-2023	Union County, Town of Clayton, Village of Des Moines, & regional community colleges
<b>Strategy 8.5.3:</b> Disseminate information to Union County residents on adult education programs, certificates, and classes (e.g., GED preparation, ESL, computer literacy, work skills training, etc.) offered at Luna Community College, Mesalands Community College, and Clovis Community College.	2020-2023	Union County, regional community colleges, & A.W. Thompson Library
<b>Strategy 8.6.1:</b> Complete a feasibility study for a jointly-owned and operated regional landfill, in coordination with the Town of Clayton, Des Moines, Folsom, Grenville, and other communities within Union County. Coordinate the findings with the New Mexico Environment Department Solid Waste Bureau.	2028-2035	Union County & Town of Clayton
<b>Strategy 8.6.2:</b> Develop solid waste transfer stations in different areas of Union County.	2028-2035	Union County

CHAPTER 9: HAZARD MITIGATION - IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE		
Implementation Strategies	Date	Responsible Entity
<b>Strategy 9.1.1:</b> Complete the ongoing Hazard Mitigation Plan in compliance with FEMA requirements. The Hazard Mitigation Plan should include, but not be limited to: 1) Creating a multi-jurisdictional planning team comprised of representatives from Union County and the four municipalities; 2) Creating the project scope, schedule, and defining responsibilities; 3) Creating an outreach strategy to engage community stakeholders; 4) Determining local capabilities; 5) Conducting a risk assessment to determine the potential impacts of hazards to the people, economy, and built and natural environments; 6) Creating a mitigation strategy of goals, actions, and action plan for reducing the potential losses identified in the risk assessment; 7) Adoption by Union County and the four municipalities of Clayton, Des Moines, Folsom, and Grenville; and 8) Ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and updating the Hazard Mitigation Plan on a five year basis.	2020-2023	Union County & Union County Emergency Manager
<b>Strategy 9.1.2:</b> Install backup generators at key facilities and shelters to protect against power loss during severe storms and other hazard events.	2028-2035	Union County
<b>Strategy 9.1.3:</b> Provide adequate accommodations during hazard events. This should include food and water, medical care, and accommodations for domestic animals.	On-going	Union County
<b>Strategy 9.1.4:</b> Facilitate on-going collaboration between Union County, State of New Mexico, FEMA, and the four municipalities of Clayton, Des Moines, Folsom, and Grenville on mitigating natural hazards.	On-going	Union County & Union County Emergency Manager
<b>Strategy 9.1.5:</b> Facilitate on-going collaboration between Union County, New Mexico Department of Agriculture, and the US Department of Agriculture to maintain the ongoing effectiveness of the Agricultural Prevention, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery Plan.	On-going	Union County, NM Dept. of Agriculture, & US Dept. of Agriculture
<b>Strategy 9.2.1:</b> Developing a public information program on wildfire mitigation, including: 1) Creating buffer zones and removing combustible materials around homes and businesses; and 2) Creating an emergency supply kit (e.g., water, food, batteries, flashlights, first aid kit, phone chargers, etc).	2020-2023	Union County & Union County Fire Coordinator
<b>Strategy 9.2.2:</b> Develop a program for weed and brush removal along natural waterways and WUI zones at risk for wildfires.	2024-2027	Union County & Union County Fire Coordinator
<b>Strategy 9.3.1:</b> Increase the number of rainwater detention basins and drainage conveyance structures to protect against future floods.	2028-2035	Union County & Union County Emergency Manager
<b>Strategy 9.3.2:</b> Provide ongoing collaboration between Union County, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, and the New Mexico Department of Homeland Safety and Emergency Management on mitigating flood hazards.	On-going	Union County & Union County Emergency Manager
<b>Strategy 9.3.3:</b> Once the Hazard Mitigation Plan is complete, participate in and remain compliant with the National Flood Insurance Program.	2028-2035	Union County
<b>Strategy 9.4.1:</b> Develop a plan for responding to hazardous spills and removals, and accidents along US 87 (Ports to Plains Corridor).	2020-2023	Union County & Union County Emergency Manager
<b>Strategy 9.4.2:</b> Provide adequate equipment and ongoing training needed to respond to hazardous spills and accidents.	On-going	Union County & Fire Chiefs
<b>Strategy 9.4.3:</b> Work with the Port of Entry in Clayton to determine when large volumes of hazardous materials are being transported through Union County.	On-going	Union County & Union County Emergency Manager

Appendices:

**A: Glossary of Terms**

**B: Community Survey Results**

**C: Funding Resources**



**Affordable Housing:** Defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development as rental or ownership housing and utilities whose monthly cost burden represents no more than 30% of the gross income of an individual or a family. Affordable housing is supported and incentivized by many programs administered through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

**Annexation:** The process that a municipality undertakes to incorporate new territories into its existing boundaries, per Article 3-7-1 through 3-7-18 NMSA 1995.

**Buffering:** The use of walls, fencing, plant materials, and/or setbacks to minimize the potentially adverse impact of one land use on another.

**Community Facility:** A building or structure owned and operated by a governmental agency to provide service to the public. A community center, school, senior center, and police station are examples.

**Density, Net:** The number of residential dwelling units per the total developable acreage of land, excluding public rights-of-way, open space, and utilities.

**Density, Gross:** The number of residential dwelling units per the total acreage of land.

**Development Standards:** Regulations that control the size of structures and the relationships of structures and uses to each other and to open areas and lot lines. Development standards include regulations controlling maximum building height, minimum lot area, minimum lot frontage, minimum setbacks, etc.

**Easement:** A “non-possessory” property interest that allows the beneficiary to use property that he or she does not own or possess. The beneficiary cannot occupy the land or to exclude others from the land, unless they interfere with the beneficiary’s use.

**Economic Development:** The process by which a community improves the local economy and social well-being of the people. This could include an improvement in the number of jobs, incomes,

education levels, organization capacity or other forms of capital.

**Economic Base Job:** A job in which services or goods provided are exported outside the local economy (i.e., sold to outside customers) and bring new money into the economy. Economic Base jobs are the key to a community’s economic growth and support a strong retail sector.

**Extraterritorial Jurisdiction:** An established area outside of a Town, City, etc. to exercise zoning and subdivision powers outside of their boundaries. It is intended to protect the use of land on the edge of communities from being encroached on by incompatible activities that might degrade adjoining property or cause a nuisance.

**Flood Zone:** A flood hazard area as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, categorized by the likelihood and depth of flooding expected annually. More information about flood zone categories can be found at <https://www.fema.gov/flood-zones>.

**Gateway:** A monument, signage, and/or landscape feature that provides a sense of entry and arrival to a community.

**Geographic Information System (GIS):** A computer based system for generating maps comprised of different informational elements such as topographical data, roadways, property lines, land use, etc.

**Gross Receipts:** The gross amounts realized on the sale or exchange of property, the performance of services, or the use of property or capital (including rents, royalties, interest and dividends) in a transaction which produces business income.

**Groundwater:** The supply of freshwater under the surface in an aquifer or geologic formation that forms the natural reservoir for potable water.

**Hemp:** The plant Cannabis Sativa L. and any part of that plant, including seeds and all derivatives, extracts, cannabinoids, isomers, acids, salts and salts of isomers, whether growing or not, with a THC concentration of not more than three-tenths percent on a dry weight basis.

**Hemp Cultivation Rule:** Establishes rules regulating the licensing of growers producing hemp in New Mexico and the establishment of testing processes to ensure uniformity to the definition of hemp.

**Hemp Harvest Certificate:** A certificate, license, permit or other document pursuant to rules adopted under the Hemp Manufacturing Act for use during transportation of hemp or hemp-derived material, whether in the possession of a person or electronically verified by a law enforcement agency.

**Historic District:** An area that contains, within definable geographic boundaries, properties or buildings that contribute to the overall historic character of the designated historic area. Historic districts contain both “contributing” properties (those that are deemed historic and may be on historic registers) and “non-contributing” properties (those that do not have historic significance due to age or condition).

**Historic Preservation:** The protection, rehabilitation, and restoration of the districts, sites, buildings, structures, and artifacts, significant in history, architecture, archeology, or culture.

**Infrastructure Capital Improvement Program (ICIP):** The multi-year scheduling of public physical improvements for the community that is typically prepared five-years in advance with a clear priority of what is needed most by the Town and includes a cost estimate.

**Infrastructure:** The underlying foundation or basic framework of a town including streets, water, sewer, storm drainage, parks, bridges, and street lights.

**Land Use:** Denotes how a parcel of land is currently used, what activities are or are not permitted on a parcel of land, and the possible requirements for future uses.

**Local Economic Development Act (LEDA):** Legislation that allows for the public support of economic development to foster, promote, and enhance local economic development efforts while continuing to protect against the unauthorized use of public money and other public resources (i.e., Anti-Donation Clause in the New Mexico

Constitution). Public entities use LEDA to enter into a “public/private partnership” for an economic benefit such as town-wide economic development or redevelopment of a historic building.

**Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC):** Under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA), LEPCs develop an emergency response plan, review the plan at least annually, and provide information about chemicals in the community to citizens. More information can be found at [www.epa.gov/epcra/local-emergency-planning-committees](http://www.epa.gov/epcra/local-emergency-planning-committees)

**Light Industry/Industrial:** The assembly, fabrication, or processing of goods and materials, including growing food or plants in an indoor structure, using processes that ordinarily do not create noise, smoke, fumes, odors, glare, or health or safety hazards outside of the building or lot where such assembly, fabrication, or processing takes place, where such processes are housed entirely within a building.

**Lot:** A parcel of land occupied or intended to be occupied by a main building or group of main buildings and accessory buildings, together with such yards, open spaces, lot width and lot areas, as recorded on a plat of record or described by metes and bounds.

**Manufactured Home:** A movable or portable housing structure over thirty-two feet in length or over eight feet in width constructed to be towed on its own chassis and designed to be installed with or without a permanent foundation for human occupancy as a residence and that may include one or more components that can be retracted for towing purposes and subsequently expanded for additional capacity or may be two or more units separately towable but designed to be joined into one integral unit, as well as a single unit. “Manufactured home” includes any movable or portable housing structure over twelve feet in width and forty feet in length that is used for nonresidential purposes.

**Mobile Home:** A single-family dwelling built on a permanent chassis designed for long-term residential occupancy and containing completed electrical, plumbing and sanitary facilities designed

to be installed in a permanent or semipermanent manner with or without a permanent foundation, which dwelling is capable of being drawn over public highways as a unit or in sections by special permit.

**Mobile Home Park (MHP):** A parcel of land used for the continuous accommodation of twelve or more occupied mobile homes and operated for the pecuniary benefit of the owner of the parcel of land, his agents, lessees or assignees.

**Multi-modal:** Transportation infrastructure that allows for the safe and effective travel of all users by providing multiple transportation choices (i.e., modes), including options for motor vehicles, public transit, bicycles, pedestrians, and other users.

**Net Metering:** A utility billing mechanism available in New Mexico that offers a credit to residential and business customers who are making excess electricity with their solar panel systems and sending it back to the grid.

**New Mexico Construction Industries and Manufactured Housing Division:** As a division of the New Mexico Regulation and Licensing Department, the CID protects consumers by licensing and regulating the state's industry. The CID is responsible for ensuring construction is performed in a safe manner; licensing contractors and enforcing licensing laws; required licensure for any person practicing or offering to practice constructing contracting; enforcing the laws, regulations, and standards governing construction contracting; and providing resolution to disputes that arise from construction activities.

**New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD):** NMEDD houses a variety of economic development programs that provide direct assistance to New Mexico businesses and support community development. NMEDD administers programs such as Local Economic Development Act, Job Training Incentive Program, FUNDIT, MainStreet Program, Rural and Economic Development Council, and Business Incubator Certification, among others.

**New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA):** The NMFA assists qualified governmental entities in the

financing of capital equipment and infrastructure projects at any stage of completion- from pre-planning through construction - by providing low-cost funds and technical assistance through a variety of financing resources.

**New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA):** The MFA provides financing for housing and other related services to low- to moderate-income New Mexicans. There are 37 state and federal programs administered by the MFA that provide financing for housing, including low interest mortgage loans and down payment assistance, weatherization, green building and rehabilitation, and tax credit programs. The MFA partners with lenders, realtors, non-profit, local governments, and developers. All state and federal housing programs are administered by the MFA, including Section 8 housing funds and other HUD projects.

**Nuisance:** The use of property or land that creates unusual, unnecessary, or undue problems or situations for persons in the vicinity that would not have normally occurred otherwise.

**Ordinance:** A municipal statute or legislative action adopted by a local government that has the force of law.

**Planning and Platting Jurisdiction:** Section 3-19-5(A) of NMSA 1978 states: Each municipality shall have planning and platting jurisdiction within its municipal boundary. Except as provided in Subsection B of this section, the planning and platting jurisdiction of a municipality: 1) having a population of twenty-five thousand or more persons includes all territory within five miles of its boundary and not within the boundary of another municipality; or 2) having a population of fewer than twenty-five thousand persons includes all territory within three miles of its boundary and not within the boundary of another municipality.

**Plat:** A plan or a map of a plot of land, containing a description of the property and everything on it, including roads, boundaries, and real property.

**Ports-to-Plain Alliance:** A non-profit, bipartisan, advocacy group that advocates for a robust international transportation infrastructure to promote economic security and prosperity

throughout North America's energy and agricultural heartland including Mexico to Canada.

**Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor:** A corridor of existing highways that provide the efficient transportation of goods and people from Mexico, through West Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, into Canada and the Pacific Northwest.

**Public Health:** The study and promotion of the overall health of a population as opposed to looking at the health of individuals alone. Public health includes efforts to improve health outcomes in a community by addressing factors that may impact many residents, such as pollution, disease exposure, access to clean water, access to health facilities, etc.

**Redevelopment:** The process of renovating, replacing, and improving the built environment through reinvestment, new construction, and reuse. Redevelopment usually involves occupation and habitation of vacant buildings, rehabilitation of older buildings, construction of new facilities, public investment in infrastructure, and other economic development activities.

**Renewable Energy:** An energy resource that is rapidly replaced by a natural process, such as power generated from the sun or from wind. Includes biomass resources, such as agriculture, animal waste, or small diameter timber, but does not include energy generated by the use of fossil or nuclear energy.

**Resolution:** A formal expression of the opinion or will of an official municipal body adopted by a vote. Unlike ordinances, resolutions do not have the force of law.

**Subdivision:** The division of land, lot, tract, or parcel into two or more lots, tracts, parcels, plats, or sites, or other divisions of land.

**Subdivision Ordinance:** A law or regulation set forth and adopted by a governmental authority, usually a city or county, to control the division of land by requiring development according to design standards and procedures.

**Substandard Building:** Any building or portion thereof, including any dwelling unit, guest room or

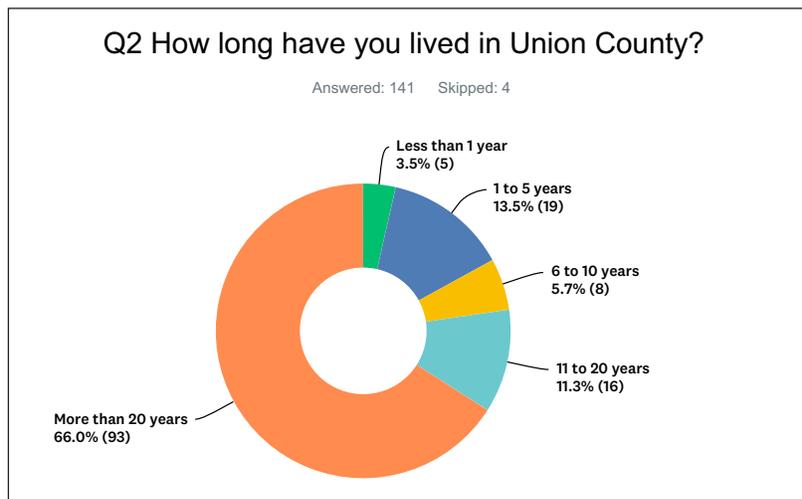
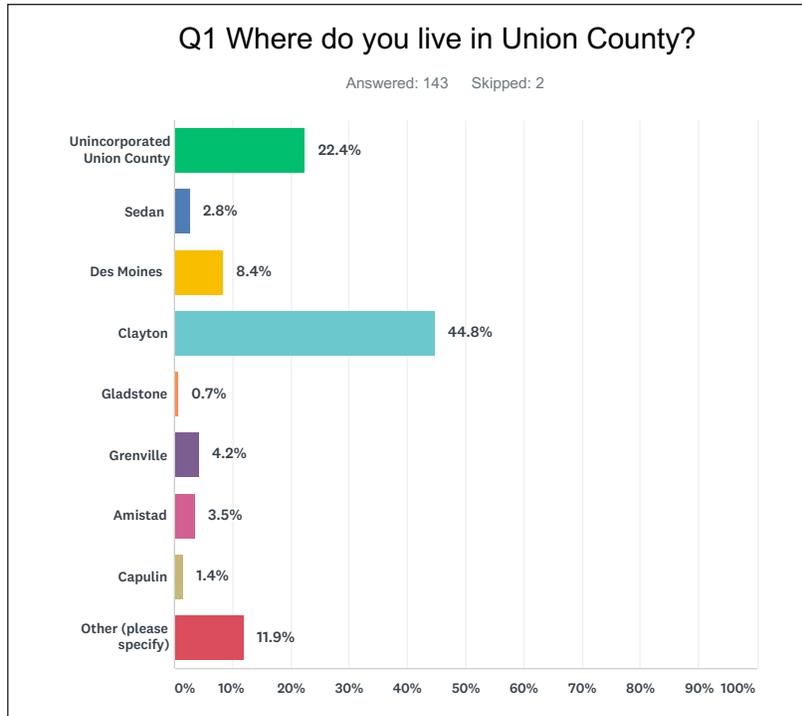
suite of rooms, or the premises on which the same is located, in which there exists conditions to an extent that endangers the life, limb, health, property, safety or welfare of the public or the occupants.

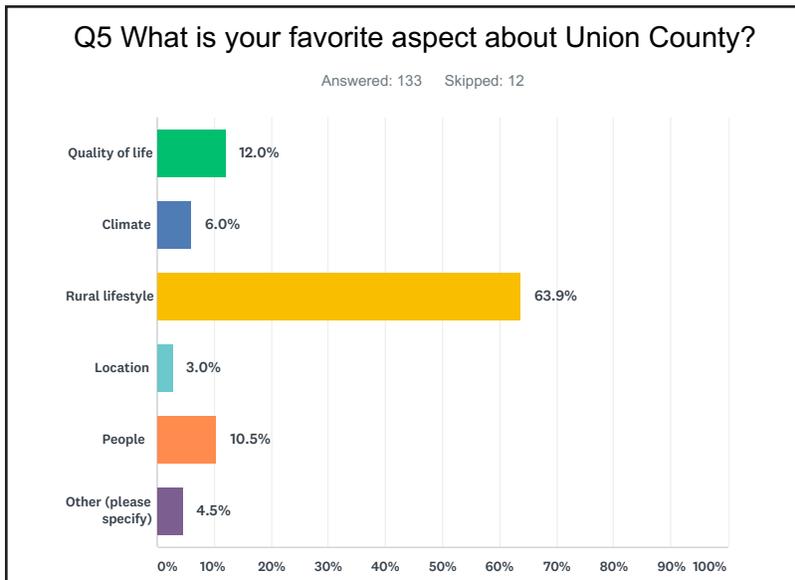
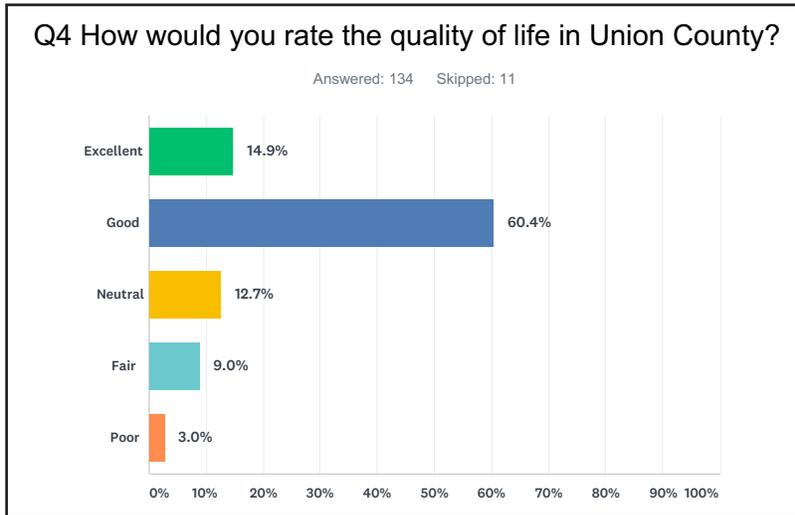
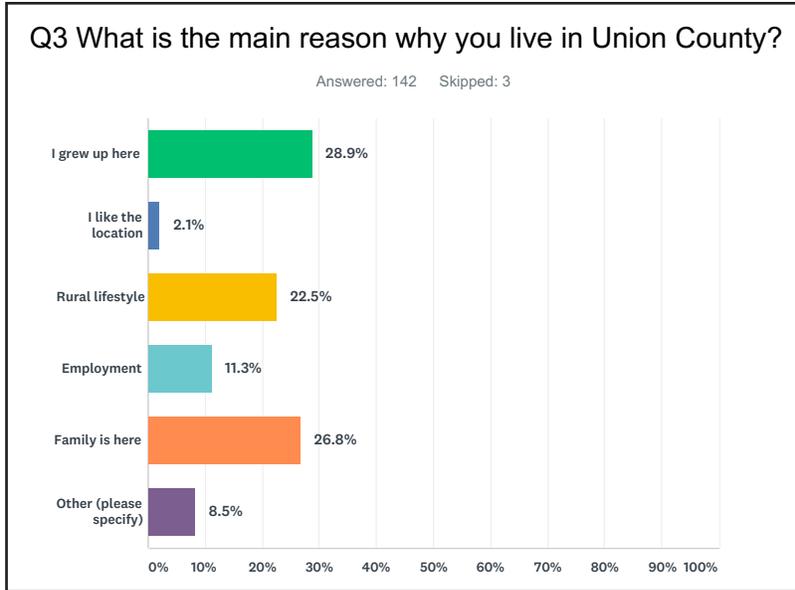
**Terrain Management:** Control of floods, drainage and erosion, and measures necessary to adapt proposed development to existing soil characteristics and topography.

**Vacant Building:** A dwelling, dwelling unit, efficiency dwelling unit, habitable space, residential building, or structure lacking the continuous habitual presence of human beings who have a legal right to be on the premises for a period of 90 days or longer but excluding property under a listing agreement with a real estate agent licensed in New Mexico.

**Wind Energy Conservation System (WECS):** All necessary devices that together convert wind energy into electricity, including the rotor, nacelle, generator, WECS Tower, and electrical components, WECS foundation, transformer, and electrical cabling from the WECS Tower to the Substation(s) and their support facilities, including transmission lines.

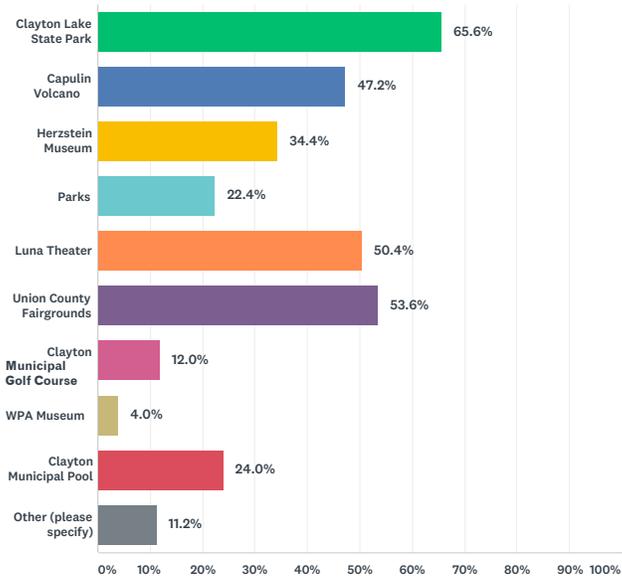
As part of the planning process to update the Union County Comprehensive Plan, Consensus Planning designed a survey to receive public input on a wide range of community issues. The survey was distributed between July 8 through August 8, 2019. The survey was available electronically via Survey Monkey and printed versions were distributed in Union County. A total of 145 people responded to the survey. The full survey results follow below.





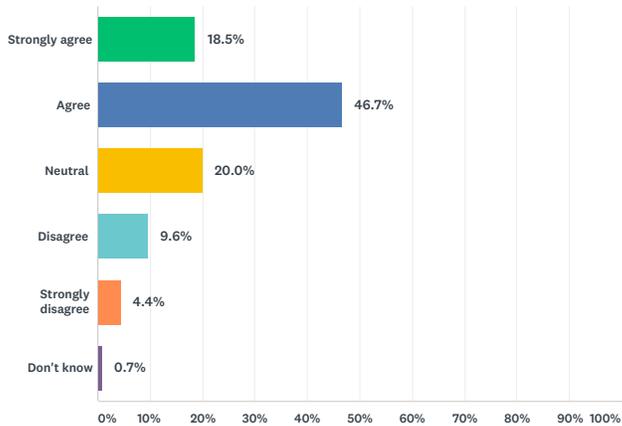
Q6 Please indicate the recreational or entertainment facilities that you or members of your family currently use (check all that apply).

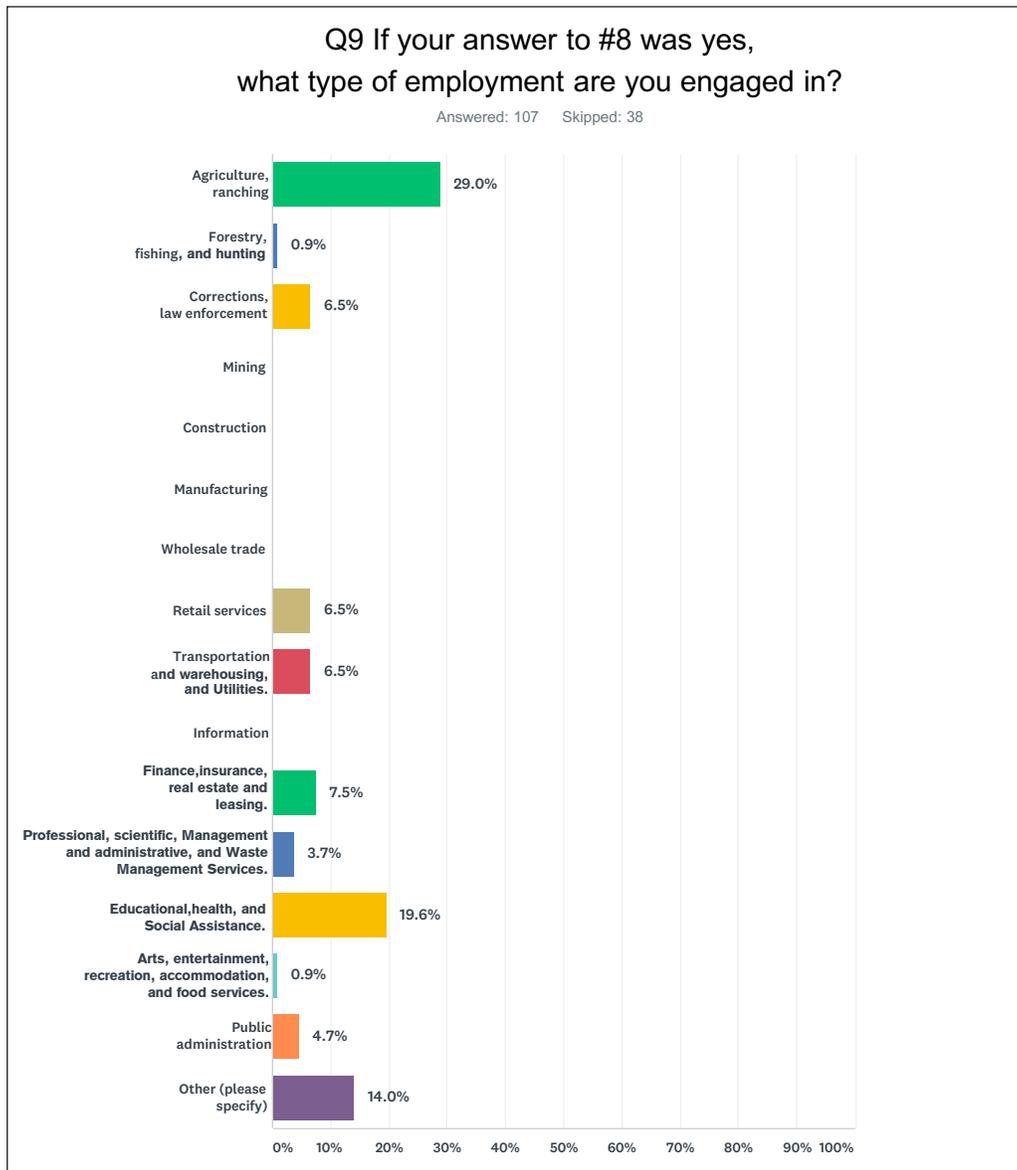
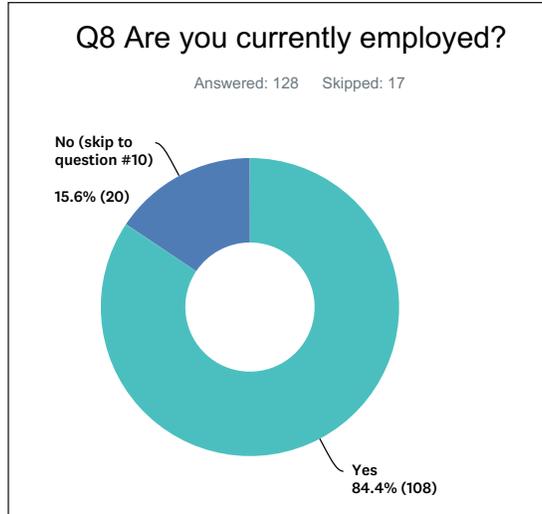
Answered: 125 Skipped: 20

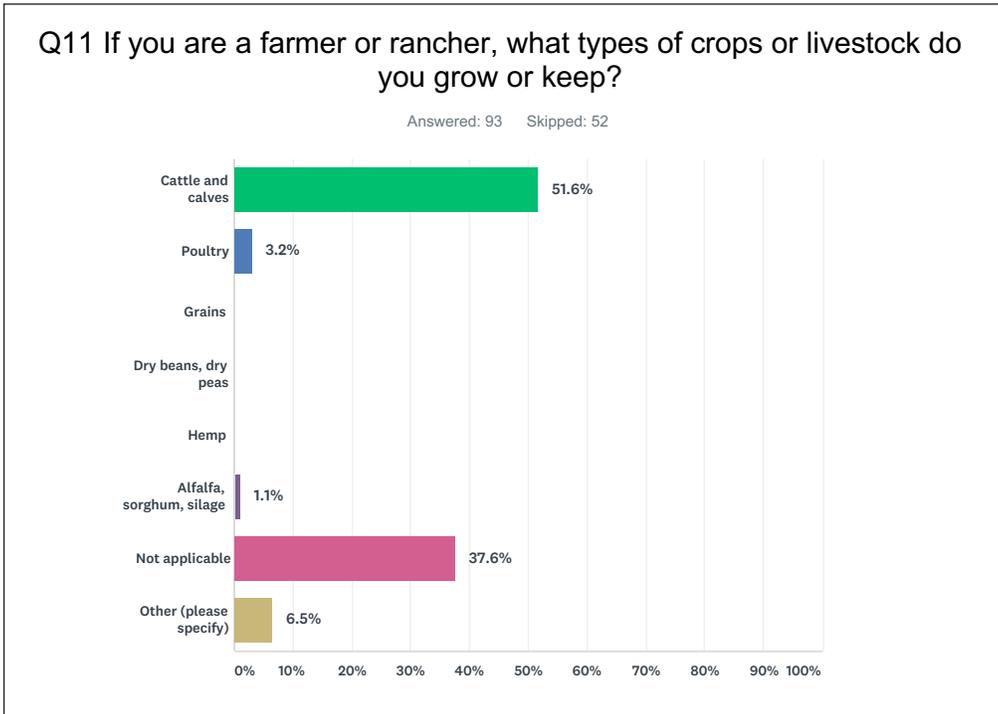
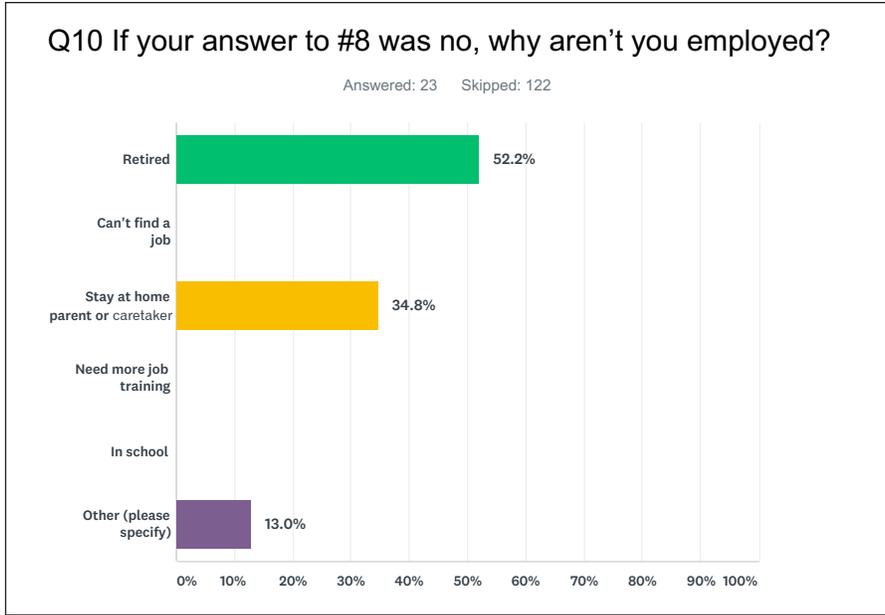


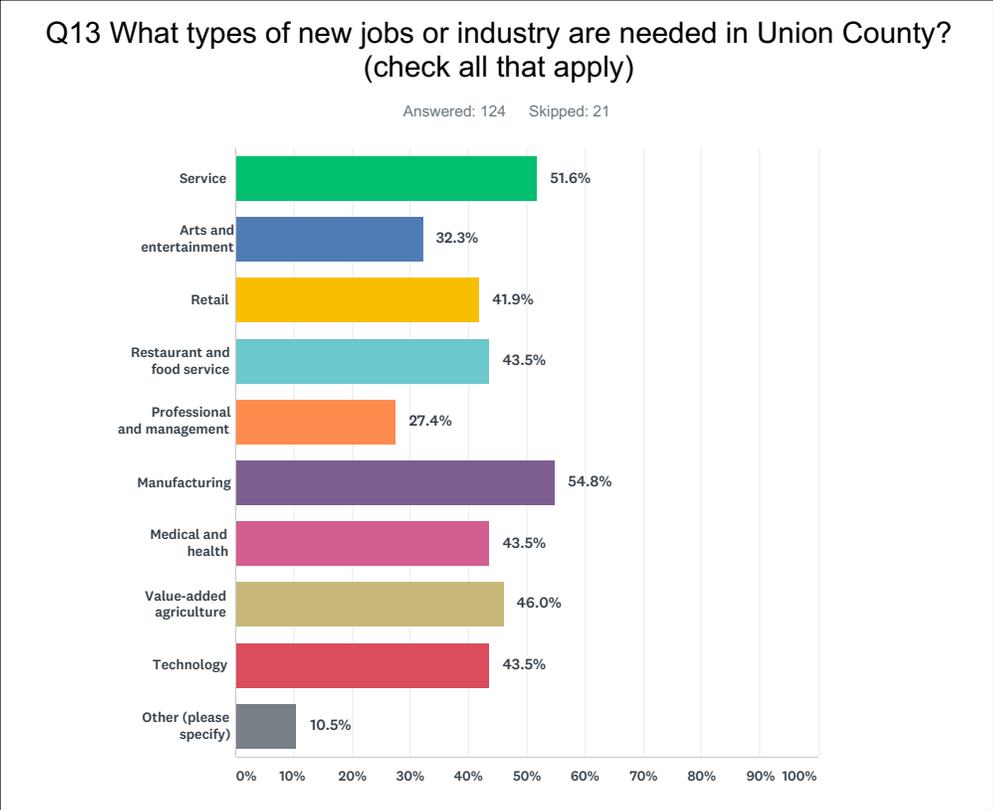
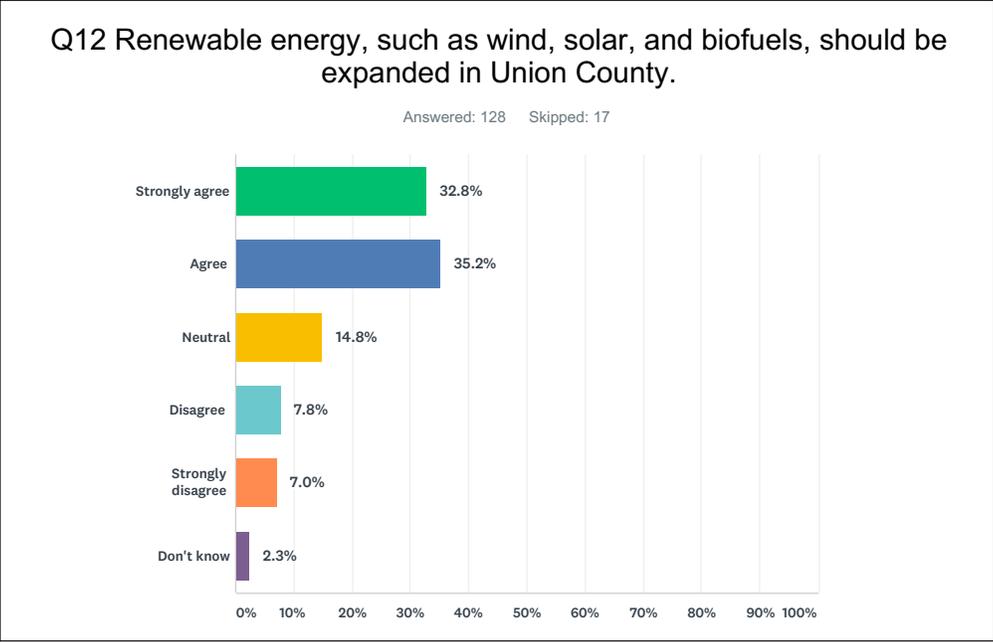
Q7 Union County provides adequate public safety services (sheriff, fire).

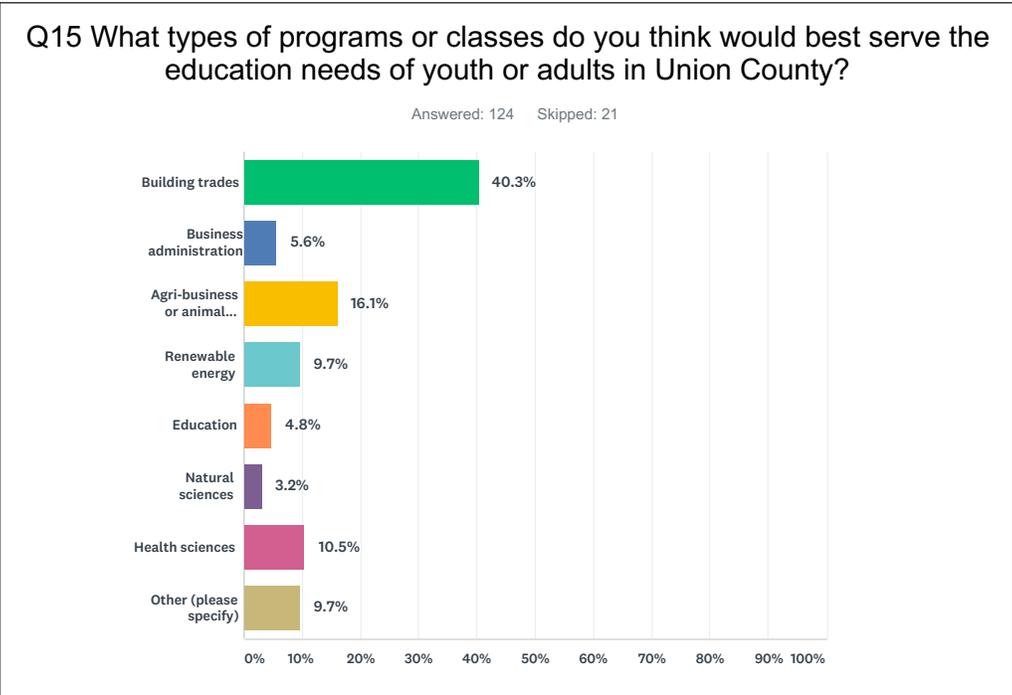
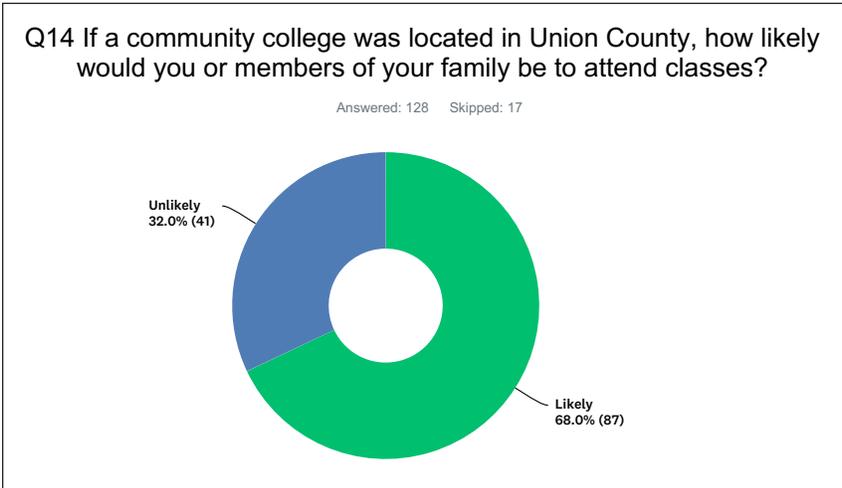
Answered: 135 Skipped: 10

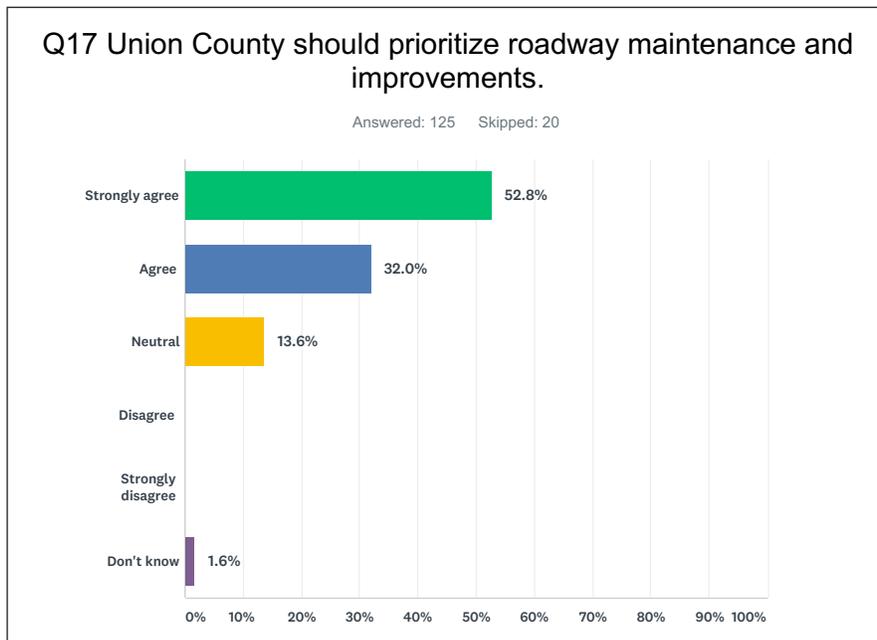
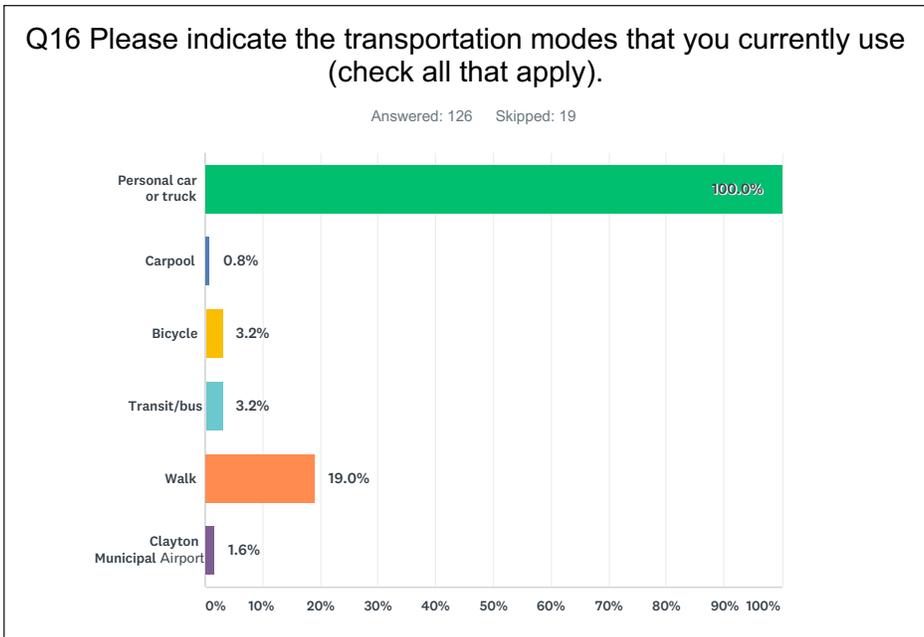












**Q18 Name three roads in Union County that are most in need of improvement?**

Answered: 82 Skipped: 63

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Sofia Rd Grenville hwy 453	8/8/2019 10:52 AM
2	state rd 417	8/8/2019 10:48 AM
3	highway 411 pacheco rd weese rd	8/8/2019 10:46 AM
4	highway 411 Pacheco Rd Weese Rd	8/8/2019 10:42 AM
5	highway 411, Pacheco Rd, Weese Rd	8/8/2019 10:39 AM
6	almost all streets in town need some repairs booster station hwy	8/8/2019 10:34 AM
7	All roads in town (know this is town responsibility); Dry Cimarron Road	8/8/2019 10:31 AM
8	Centerville HWY 417 Romero Road	8/8/2019 10:23 AM
9	West Broadway, Sante Fe Trail rd, 3rd ave	8/7/2019 7:50 AM
10	US64/87, US 87 and US 56	8/7/2019 5:16 AM
11	1) North 5th Street & Santa Fe Dive 2) Wilson Street 3) Locust	8/4/2019 5:37 AM
12	All County Roads	7/31/2019 6:15 AM
13	The road between Clayton and Des Moines, eastbound, is patched horribly.	7/30/2019 3:42 PM
14	Springer Highway, Nara Visa Highway, Boise City Highway	7/23/2019 12:09 PM
15	402 (Nara Visa Hwy) 406 (Kenton Hwy) US 56 (Springer Hwy & Boise City Hwy) Springer Hwy more so.	7/23/2019 9:01 AM
16	NM 417 south of Amistad NM 420	7/23/2019 2:26 AM
17	U.S. 87 from state line to Grenville	7/20/2019 12:13 PM
18	406, 411, 370	7/18/2019 3:37 AM
19	All	7/17/2019 12:36 PM
20	402 Royce cambell	7/17/2019 5:55 AM
21	All roads IN the town of Clayton 402, 421, 417	7/17/2019 5:43 AM
22	All the roads around the schools and hospital should be a priority.	7/16/2019 10:23 AM
23	Hwy 72, B030	7/16/2019 5:02 AM
24	Highway 562, Sedan Hwy, Clapham road	7/15/2019 11:34 AM
25	Oliver, Seneca Valley and 406	7/15/2019 10:02 AM
26	Cowen Perkins and Speer	7/15/2019 8:20 AM
27	NM State Hwy 456 NM State Hwy 551 NM State HWY 370	7/14/2019 7:35 AM
28	Highway 370 (The caliche portion, not the paved) Highway 456	7/13/2019 2:48 AM
29	Highway 453 Highway 370 Highway 402	7/12/2019 5:01 PM
30	Any town roads in Clayton. Lots of potholes. Main roads are good.	7/12/2019 3:51 PM
31	325 and 456	7/12/2019 3:48 PM
32	87,56,405	7/12/2019 2:21 PM
33	Maple st, walnut st , 2nd st	7/12/2019 12:08 PM
34	456	7/12/2019 8:03 AM
35	Clayton Lake Road,	7/12/2019 6:46 AM
36	64/87 Folsom highway	7/12/2019 6:16 AM
37	Aspen, spruce, front	7/12/2019 4:42 AM
38	370, 402 and 54	7/12/2019 4:17 AM
39	Severro rd weatherly rd. 64/87	7/12/2019 3:35 AM
40	402, 102, 562	7/12/2019 2:19 AM
41	Cuates, Proffit, severo	7/12/2019 1:56 AM
42	Pennington Rd Blue front rd	7/12/2019 1:12 AM
43	Sedan highway.	7/11/2019 9:54 PM
44	All roads need improvement	7/11/2019 4:28 PM

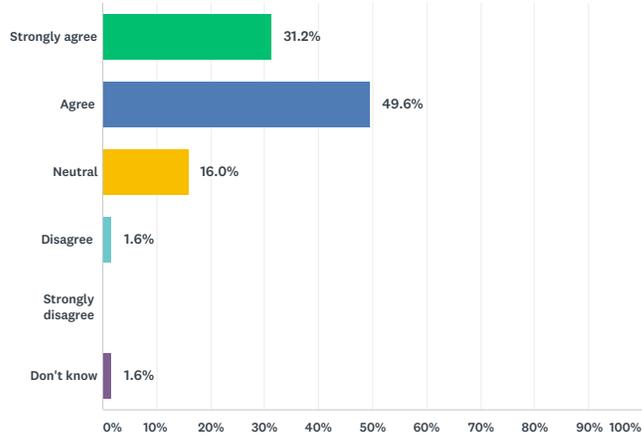
## Appendix B: Community Survey Results

### (QUESTION 18 CONTINUED)

45	Adams street,	7/11/2019 4:14 PM
46	402, 421	7/11/2019 3:59 PM
47	Any road in Capulin, Greenville Hwy,	7/11/2019 3:50 PM
48	Lake road, Cedar St, Main road to Football Stadium	7/11/2019 3:46 PM
49	I don't travel enough of them to offer suggestions. But, it might that 56/412 should be widened with passing lanes.	7/11/2019 3:41 PM
50	North end of North Front St	7/11/2019 3:36 PM
51	Miera St Cedar Devoy St	7/11/2019 3:24 PM
52	56 and 453	7/11/2019 2:34 PM
53	Sedan highway main street through downtown highway 387	7/11/2019 2:06 PM
54	Lake Road. Sofia County Rd need Calche and the Greenville County RD need Calche	7/11/2019 1:59 PM
55	370 56 456	7/11/2019 1:47 PM
56	Spool road, spool road, and the spool road	7/11/2019 1:46 PM
57	I think the county roads are pretty well maintained .	7/11/2019 1:27 PM
58	56, 370, 456	7/11/2019 1:26 PM
59	Every road in clayton	7/11/2019 12:37 PM
60	All	7/11/2019 12:25 PM
61	Lake Road	7/11/2019 12:18 PM
62	Lake Highway,	7/11/2019 11:52 AM
63	All highways and county roads	7/11/2019 11:02 AM
64	Highway 325, Highway 551, Highway 456	7/11/2019 10:58 AM
65	Highway 402. highway 102	7/11/2019 10:50 AM
66	St Hwy 402, St Hwy 417, County Road - - Vandiver Rd.	7/11/2019 10:45 AM
67	127 Wagner Road	7/11/2019 10:08 AM
68	402 and Kenton Highway	7/11/2019 10:07 AM
69	Xx	7/11/2019 9:55 AM
70	All of the town of Clayton	7/11/2019 9:54 AM
71	Clayton Lake Rd HWY 402	7/11/2019 9:42 AM
72	Highway 456 Highway 87-64 Highway 72	7/11/2019 7:54 AM
73	The county roads I travel are in good shape.	7/11/2019 7:30 AM
74	Sofia	7/11/2019 6:53 AM
75	Lake Highway NM Hwy 406/NM 18 / Kenton Highway Roads around Loves Truckstop	7/11/2019 5:26 AM
76	Boggs, Callis, Anderson	7/11/2019 4:42 AM
77	Campsey Road, Hwy 402	7/11/2019 3:23 AM
78	Pin on South front	7/11/2019 2:17 AM
79	Hwy 402, 417,	7/11/2019 12:33 AM
80	5th st, all roads around loves, road in front of junior high	7/10/2019 12:27 PM
81	Sedan Hwy Texline to Des moines	7/10/2019 11:58 AM
82	Campsey Road, Leavitt Road, Hwy 402 at Sedan Hwy	7/10/2019 9:49 AM

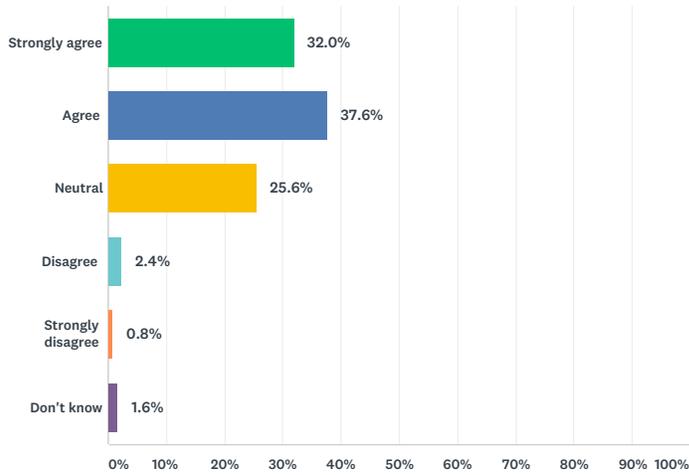
**Q19 Union County needs additional commercial retail and services to serve residents.**

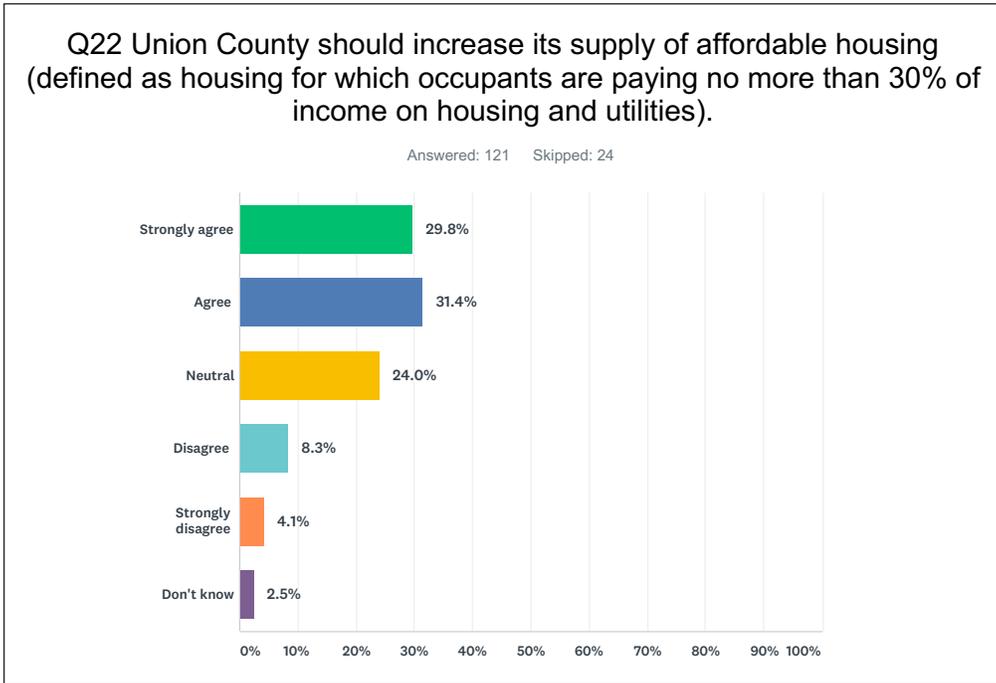
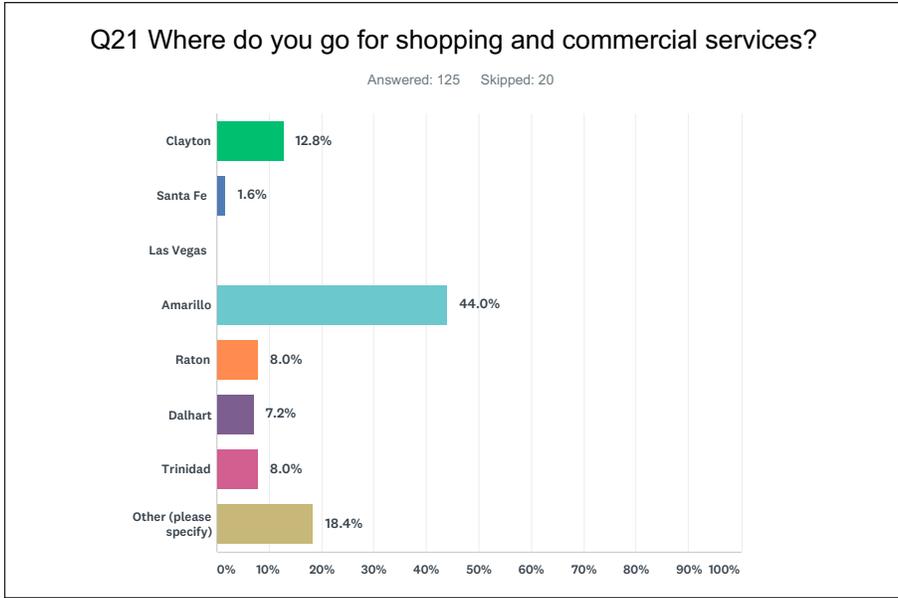
Answered: 125 Skipped: 20



**Q20 The visual appearance of Union County should be improved.**

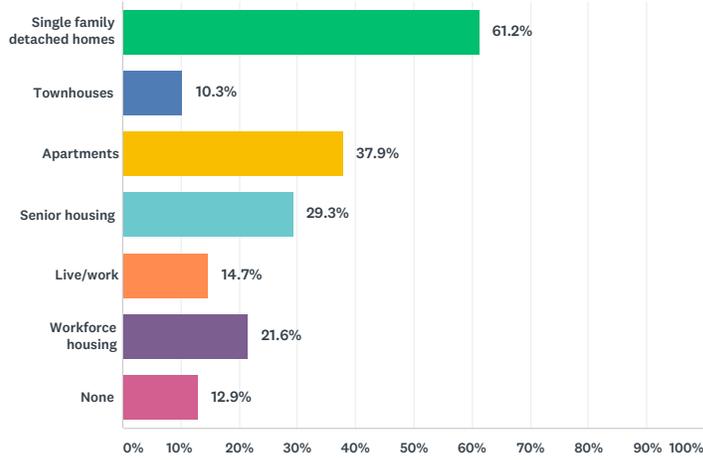
Answered: 125 Skipped: 20





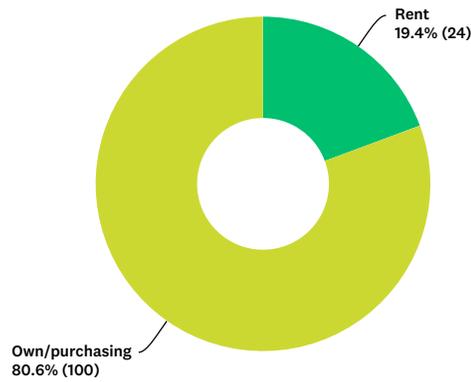
Q23 Union County needs more of the following types of housing (check all that apply).

Answered: 116 Skipped: 29



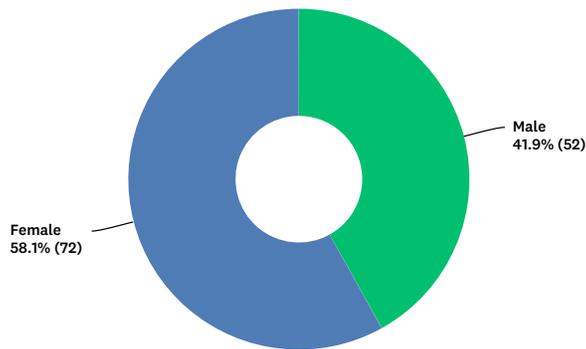
Q24 Do you rent or own your home?

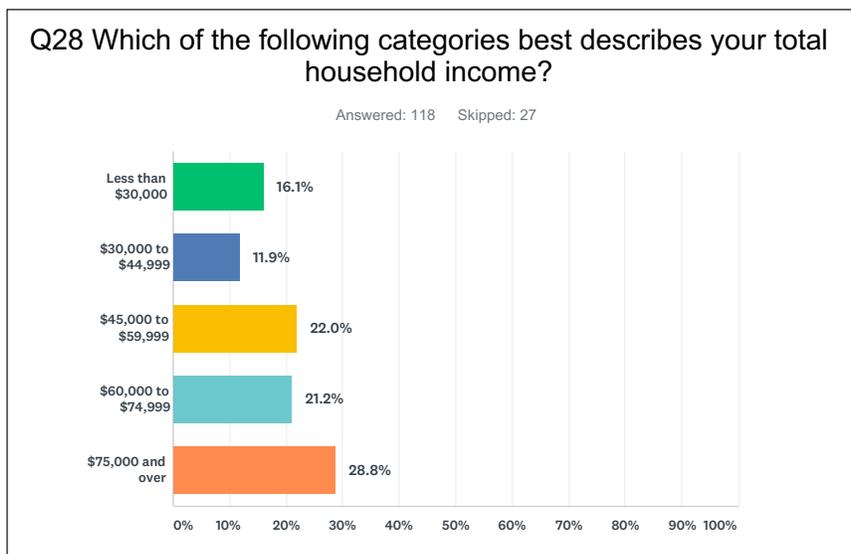
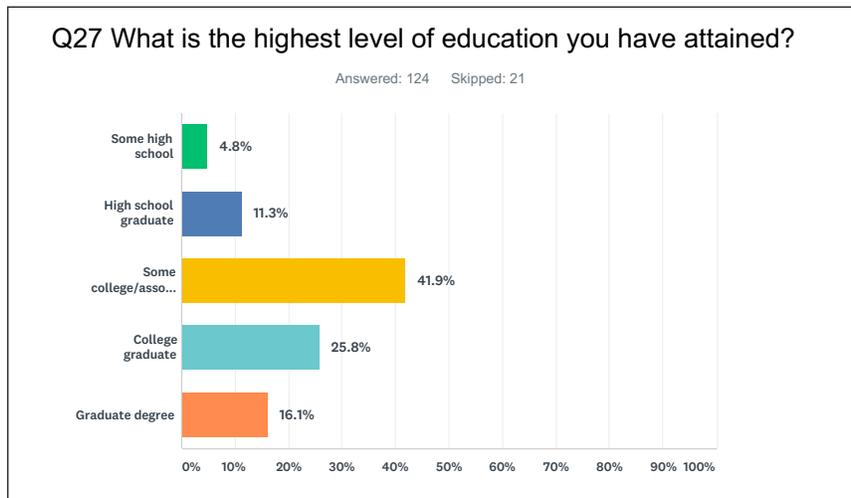
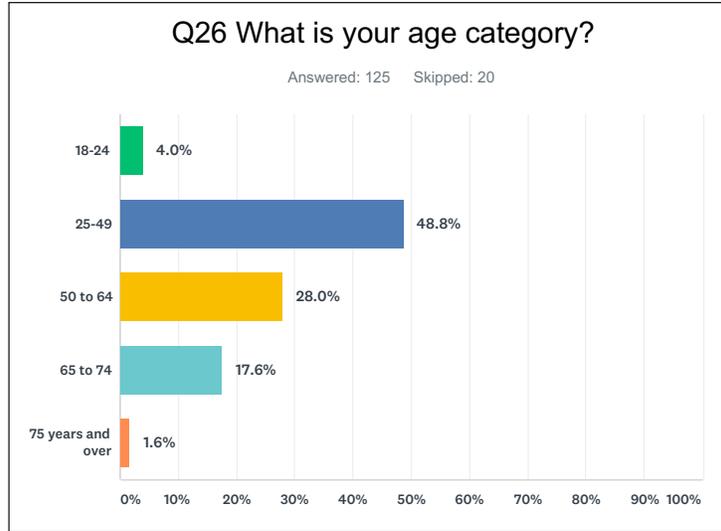
Answered: 124 Skipped: 21



Q25 What is your gender?

Answered: 124 Skipped: 21





This section includes a brief list of federal and state economic, business, infrastructure development, and housing resources available to both local governments and people interested in redevelopment, business development, in need of a small business loan, historic preservation, housing assistance, etc. Each of these programs require applicants to meet certain qualifications in order to be eligible for funding. Contact information is provided for each program.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Cooperative Agreements Program (COOP) Local Government Road Fund

The program assists local governments and other public entities to improve, construct, maintain, repair, and pave highways and streets and public parking lots. Funds must be used for the construction, maintenance, repair, and the improvements of public highways, streets, and parking lots. The local match is 40% and awards range from \$9,000 to \$192,000. Funds are made available at the beginning of the fiscal year and must be encumbered and spent no later than the end of the fiscal year.

Contact: NMDOT, Maintenance Section  
1120 Cerrillos Road  
P.O. Box 1149  
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1149  
Phone: (505) 827-5498  
Website: [http://dot.state.nm.us/content/dam/nmdot/planning/2014\\_Handbook.pdf](http://dot.state.nm.us/content/dam/nmdot/planning/2014_Handbook.pdf)

### Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

This program is administered by the National Park Service. The state side of the LWCF provides matching grants to states and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities. The New Mexico State Parks Division of the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department administers the state program. State agencies, municipalities, counties, schools, and tribes have developed and improved over 1,000 close to home outdoor recreation areas in response to the needs of its citizens and visitors by providing a permanent legacy of parks, facilities, and open space.

Contact: National Park Service  
1849 C Street, NW, Org-2225  
Washington, D.C. 20240  
Website: [www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/index.htm)

### Local Government Planning Fund

Created in 2002, the fund provides up-front capital necessary to allow for proper planning of vital water and wastewater projects. The 2005 Legislature (HB 304, Sandoval) broadened project eligibility to include master plans, conservation plans and economic development plans and to allow NMFA to “forgive” the loan if the entity finances the project through NMFA.

Contact: New Mexico Finance Authority  
207 Shelby Street  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
Phone: (505) 984-1454  
Email: [frontdesk@nmfa.net](mailto:frontdesk@nmfa.net)  
Website: <https://www.nmfa.net/financing/planning-grants/local-government-planning-grants/>

### Municipal Arterial Program (MAP) Local Government Road Fund

This program assists municipalities construct and reconstruct streets which are principal extensions of the rural highway system and other streets which qualify under New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) criteria. Municipalities are required to contribute 25% to the cost of the project. There is no set limit to the amount of awards, but the state share typically ranges from \$50,000 to \$1.1 million per project. Applications must be received by March 15th for funding to be considered by the fiscal year beginning July 1. Municipalities must submit applications provided by the NMDOT Transportation Planning Division.

Contact: Engineer Maintenance Section,  
NMDOT  
1120 Cerrillos Road  
PO Box 1149  
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1149  
Phone: (505) 827-5498  
Website: [http://dot.state.nm.us/content/dam/nmdot/planning/2014\\_Handbook.pdf](http://dot.state.nm.us/content/dam/nmdot/planning/2014_Handbook.pdf)

### Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF)

The Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF) offers many examples of NMFA's investment of time, expertise, and capital. The PPRF has provided the means for unusual projects to receive financing. The PPRF is being looked at to provide an increasing array of public projects. Many of these projects have less proven revenue streams but do not have other viable sources of financing. Created in 1994, the PPRF program assists a wide range of public credits in accessing the capital markets with advantage of offering to all borrowers (regardless of their credit worthiness) fixed 'AAA' - insured interest rates.

Contact: New Mexico Finance Authority  
207 Shelby Street  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
Phone: (505) 992-9639  
Email: [frontdesk@nmfa.net](mailto:frontdesk@nmfa.net)  
Website: <https://www.nmfa.net/financing/public-project-revolving-fund/information-about-pprf-bonds/>

### Sustainable Communities Initiatives Grant Program

This program supports locally-led collaborative efforts that bring together diverse interests from the many municipalities in a region to determine how to best target housing, economic and workforce development, and infrastructure investments to create more jobs and regional economic activity. The Community Challenge Grant Program fosters reform and reduces barriers to achieving affordable, economically vital, and sustainable communities. Community Challenge efforts include amending or replacing local master plans, zoning codes, and building codes to promote mixed-use development, affordable housing, the reuse of older buildings, and similar activities.

Contact: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
P.O. Box 23268  
Washington, DC 20026-3268  
Phone: 1-800-245-2691  
Website: [https://www.hud.gov/program\\_offices/economic\\_development/sustainable\\_](https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/economic_development/sustainable_)

### USDA Rural Development Programs

The USDA provides assistance to rural communities through a wide array of loan and grant programs for businesses, housing, community facilities, agricultural producers, utilities, and telecommunications. The goal is to improve the economic health of rural communities by increasing access to business capital through loan guarantees. This enables commercial lenders to provide affordable financing for rural businesses. Applicants may include public bodies, non-profits, and business owners. Key programs available in New Mexico include:

- Business and Industry Loan Guarantees
- Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program
- Multi-Family Housing Direct Loans, Loan Guarantees, and Rental Assistance
- Single Family Housing Direct Home Loans, Guaranteed Loan Program, and Repair Loans and Grants
- Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans & Loan Guarantees
- Value-added Producer Grants
- Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant Program

Contact: USDA Rural Development  
Las Vegas Field Office  
1927-A N. 7th Street  
Las Vegas, NM 87701  
Phone: (505) 425-3594 Ext. 4  
Website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/nm>

### New Mexico Department of Agriculture

The New Mexico Department of Agriculture administers the Agricultural Development and Promotion Funds Program which was created to promote agricultural growth and rural stability, maintain and increase markets for new products, and develop value-added products. The program may be used to promote and market specialty crops and livestock.

Contact: New Mexico Department of Agriculture  
Marketing and Development  
MSC 5600  
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8005  
Phone: (575) 646-4929  
Website: [www.nmda.nmsu.edu](http://www.nmda.nmsu.edu)

### New Mexico Department of Transportation Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

TAP is a federal aid funding program authorized through the FAST Act as part of the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program. TAP funds can generally be used for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and activities, in addition to other projects, as outlined in the NM Active Transportation and Recreational Programs Guide. The NMDOT administers the program using its own competitive process, in accordance with the law. Approximately every two years, NMDOT coordinates with the state's seven RTPOs and five MPOs on soliciting TAP applications.

Contact: NMDOT District 4 Office  
28 Industrial Drive  
Las Vegas, NM 87701  
Phone: (505) 429-0210  
Website: <http://dot.state.nm.us/content/nmdot/en/D4.html>

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

### ACCION New Mexico

ACCION New Mexico makes loans to small businesses that may not qualify for bank loans, and also provides business support services.

Contact: ACCION New Mexico  
20 First Plaza NW, Suite 417  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Phone: (505) 243-8844  
Website: [www.accionnm.org](http://www.accionnm.org)

### High Wage Jobs Tax Credit

A taxpayer who is an eligible employer may apply for and receive a tax credit for each new high-wage economic-base job. The credit amount equals 10% of the wages and benefits paid for each new economic-base job created. Qualified employers can take the credit for four years. The credit may only be claimed for up to one year after the end of the four qualifying periods. The credit can be applied to the state portion of the gross receipts tax, compensating tax, and withholding tax. Any excess credit will be refunded to the taxpayer.

Contact: NM Taxation and Revenue Department  
1100 South St. Francis Drive  
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Phone: (505) 827-0700  
Website: <http://gonm.biz/why-new-mexico/competitive-business-climate/incentives/high-wage-jobs-tax-credit>

### Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP)

JTIP is one of the most valuable incentives offered to new employers in New Mexico and can be used effectively in recruitment packages. JTIP reimburses 50 to 70% of employee wages and required travel expenses during an extended training period for new hires for new and expanding companies in New Mexico. JTIP must be applied for and approved prior to reimbursable wages being paid.

Contact: Joseph M. Montoya Building  
1100 S. St. Francis Drive  
Santa Fe, NM 87505-4147  
Phone: (505) 827-0249  
Website: <https://gonm.biz/business-resource-center/edd-programs-for-business/job-training-incentive-program/>

### Small Business Development Center

The Mesalands Community College Small Business Development Center (SBDC) located in Tucumcari, specializes in individual advising, offering services paid for by the State of New Mexico and Small Business Administration (SBA). The Mesalands SBDC provides assistance with:

- Business start-up and acquisition issues;
- Sources of capital;
- Basic bookkeeping/accounting review and training;
- Computer assistance;
- Assistance with marketing plans and research;
- Information about government procurement opportunities;
- Information and referrals; and
- Business workshops and conferences

Contact: Mesalands Community College, SBDC  
911 South Tenth Street  
Tucumcari, NM 88401  
Phone: (575) 461-4413  
Website: [www.mesalands.edu/community/small-business-development-center](http://www.mesalands.edu/community/small-business-development-center)

### SBA 7A Loan Program

SBA 7A Loan Program is the standard SBA loan guarantee program. Up to 80% of a bank loan to a private business can be guaranteed. Banks still accomplish normal due diligence, but may be willing to accept slightly more risk. This program increases the aggregate amount of funds available to small business in the banking system. It can also serve to extend term.

Contact: U.S. Small Business Administration,  
New Mexico District Office  
625 Silver Avenue SW, Suite 320  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Phone: (505) 248-8225  
Website: [www.sba.gov/partners/lenders/7a-loan-program/types-7a-loans](http://www.sba.gov/partners/lenders/7a-loan-program/types-7a-loans)

### New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership

The New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership provides efficiency training, training in lean manufacturing, and ISO 9000 certification (now temporarily suspended) to the state's small and medium-sized businesses.

Contact: New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership  
4501 Indian School Rd. NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87110  
Phone: (505) 262-0921  
Website: [www.newmexicomep.org](http://www.newmexicomep.org)

### New Mexico Partnership

The New Mexico Partnership is a private, non-profit organization that offers assistance to businesses looking to expand or relocate to New Mexico. It can assist businesses on a variety of business initiatives including:

- Initiate real estate searches;
- Coordinate site-selection trips;
- Personalize briefings and orientations;
- Assist in evaluating and applying for incentives;
- Facilitate the permitting process;
- Organize strategic meetings with key government and community officials;
- Collaborate on media and public relations; and
- Provide data on key business factors.

NM Partnership can also assist with agri-business tax credits.

Contact: New Mexico Partnership  
1720 Louisiana Blvd NE, Suite 312  
Albuquerque, NM 87110  
Phone: (505) 247-8500  
Website: [www.nmpartnership.com/](http://www.nmpartnership.com/)

### SMART Money Loan Participation Program

This program is administered by the New Mexico Finance Authority and intended to leverage funds provided by local New Mexico banks for businesses that create quality jobs. The program provides bank participation loans, direct loans, and loan and bond guarantees on behalf of private for-profit and non-profit entities. The program is designed to create greater access to capital for businesses throughout New Mexico, lower the cost for the borrower, and share the risk with the bank creating a benefit to both the bank and borrower. Business loans must result in job creation and economic benefit and carry a minimum of risk.

Contact: New Mexico Finance Authority  
207 Shelby Street  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
(505) 992-9638  
Website: <https://www.nmfa.net/financing/loan-participation-programs/smart-money/>

### The Loan Fund

The Loan Fund provides loans, training, and business consulting to small businesses that do not qualify for a bank loan, but still have a viable need for a loan and the ability to pay it back. This program started out as a micro-lending organization, but can now make loans up to \$200,000 in exceptional circumstances. Loans carry a higher than market rate to compensate for risk.

### SBA 504 Loan Program

SBA 504 Loan Program is a cooperative loan program between the SBA, a bank, and a certified development corporation. An SBA 504 loan is a participation loan in which the SBA loans money directly to a business in participation with a bank. This loan can only be used for fixed asset financing. The primary

benefit to borrowers is that it allows for minimal equity (10%) and it can also serve to extend the term.

### **SBA Microloan Program**

Loans to small businesses up to \$50,000. Loans can be used for working capital, inventory or supplies, furniture or fixtures, machinery, or equipment. Loans less than \$10,000 carry interest rates of 8.7%. Loans above \$10,000 carry interest rates of 7.875%. All loans can have up to 6 years.

Contact: The Loan Fund  
423 Iron Avenue SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87102-3821  
(505) 243-3196  
Website: [www.loanfund.org](http://www.loanfund.org)

### **WESST**

WESST's Santa Fe office serves emerging and existing small business owners (men and women) in seven counties, including Union, Taos, Mora, Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, Los Alamos, Colfax, Harding, San Miguel, Guadalupe, and Quay counties. WESST Santa Fe is one of six WESST offices that houses a Women's Business Center Program (WBC), funded in part by the U.S. Small Business Administration. The WBC Program offers a variety of training and consulting services geared to, but not limited to, women. If loans are needed, WESST will assist clients with their loan packages, financial projections, and provide information about various loan sources within the community, including their loan fund. WESST is also a participant in the SBA's microloan program.

Contact: Santa Fe Business Incubator  
3900 Paseo del Sol, Suite 351  
Santa Fe, NM 87507  
Phone: (505) 474-6556  
Website: <https://www.wesst.org/santa-fe/>

## **CLEAN ENERGY**

### **Clean Energy Performance Financing**

The Energy Savings Performance Contracting (ESPC) is a process that facilitates facility improvements without the need for up front capital funding from the agency.

### **New Mexico Renewable Energy Tax Incentives**

Tax incentives are available for the development of sustainable and renewable energy projects. Tax credits are available for sustainable buildings; agricultural biomass; geothermal heat pump; biodiesel facilities; renewable energy production; and solar market. New Mexico also provides a Gross Receipts Tax Exemption for wind and solar systems. The federal government provides tax credits, rebates, and savings for renewable energy projects.

Contact: EMNRD Energy Conservation and Management Division  
1220 South St. Francis Drive  
Wendell Chino Building, First Floor  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
(505) 476-3310  
Fax: (505) 476-3322

## **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

### **National Trust for Historic Preservation**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a nonprofit organization that provides leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize our communities. The National Trust Preservation Fund offers several types of financial assistance to nonprofit organizations, public agencies, for-profit companies, and individuals involved in preservation-related projects. Grants can range from \$2,500 to over \$150,000. Information is available for Special Grant Programs on the NTHP website.

Contact: National Trust for Historic Preservation  
2600 Virginia Avenue NW, Suite 1100  
Washington, DC 20037-2117  
Phone: (202) 588-6000 or (800) 944-6847  
Email: [info@nthp.org](mailto:info@nthp.org)  
Website: [www.savingplaces.org/](http://www.savingplaces.org/)

### **State Tax Credit for Registered Cultural Properties**

This program is available to owners of historic structures who accomplish qualified rehabilitation on a structure or stabilization or protection of an archaeological site. The property must be individually

listed in, or contributing to a historic district listed in the State Register of Cultural Properties. The credit is applied against New Mexico income taxes owed in the year the project is completed and the balance may be carried forward for up to four additional years. Maximum in eligible expenses is \$50,000 for a tax credit of \$25,000, unless the project is within a state-approved and certified Arts and Cultural District, in which case the maximum is \$50,000. There is no minimum project expense. This program has provide accessible and useful for small projects that can include facade improvements.

Contact: Department of Cultural Affairs -  
New Mexico Historic Preservation  
Bataan Memorial Building  
407 Galisteo Street, Suite 236  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
Phone: (505) 827-6320  
E-mail: nm.shpo@state.nm.us  
Website: www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/

### **U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)**

The Transportation Enhancement (TE) activities offer funding opportunities to help expand transportation choices and enhance the transportation experience through 12 eligible TE activities related to surface transportation, including pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and safety programs, scenic and historic highway programs, landscaping and scenic beautification, historic preservation, and environmental mitigation. TE projects must relate to surface transportation and must qualify under one or more of the 12 eligible categories.

Contact: USDOT Federal Highway  
Administration  
New Mexico Division  
4001 Office Court Drive, Suite 801  
Santa Fe, NM 87507  
Phone: (505) 820-2021  
Website: www.fhwa.dot.gov/  
Environment/transportation\_  
enhancements/

## **HOUSING ASSISTANCE**

### **New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA)**

The MFA provides financing for housing and other related services to low- to moderate-income New Mexicans. There are 37 state and federal programs administered by the MFA that provide financing for housing, including low interest mortgage loans and down payment assistance, weatherization, green building and rehabilitation, and tax credit programs. The MFA partners with lenders, realtors, non-profit, local governments, and developers. All state and federal housing programs are administered by the MFA, including Section 8 housing funds and other HUD projects. Some of the primary rental and homeownership programs administered by MFA include:

#### ***HOME Investment Partnerships Program***

Assistance is provided to income qualified homeowners who lack the resources to make necessary repairs to their homes. Assistance can be used for reimbursement of costs for rehabilitation, including applicable codes, standards or ordinances, rehabilitation standards, essential improvements, energy-related improvements, lead-based paint hazard reduction, accessibility for disabled persons, repair or replacement of major housing systems, incipient repairs and general property improvements of a non-luxury nature, site improvements and utility connections. Non-profits, housing authorities, and local governments administer the homeowner rehabilitation program. Funds are awarded through a RFP/Application process. MFA has also reserved funds for the Reservation Rehabilitation program to provide loans to homeowners on a house-by-house, first-come, first-served basis.

#### ***New Mexico Housing Trust Fund***

This program provides flexible funding for affordable housing initiatives for persons or households of low or moderate income. Nonprofit organizations, for-profit organizations, governmental housing agencies, regional housing authorities, governmental entities, governmental instrumentalities, tribal

governments, tribal housing agencies and other entities. Costs of infrastructure, construction, acquisition and rehabilitation necessary to support affordable single family or rental housing. Interest rates are approximately 1 to 5% per annum. Construction is up to three years (current maximum \$1,500,000). Long term amortizing up to 30 years (current maximum: \$500,000). Requirements for rental households are those earning 60% or less AMI. Requirements for single family households are those earning 80% or less AMI.

#### ***Primero Investment Fund Loan Program***

This is a flexible, low cost loan program created to finance the development of affordable rental or special needs residential facilities that would be considered “high risk” by traditional lenders. The purpose of the program is to leverage other public and private funds and to expand the housing development capacity of New Mexico’s nonprofit, tribal, and public agency housing providers. The Primero Investment Fund has been broadened over the years to include the financing of all types of projects that cannot be accommodated by existing sources -- particularly the secondary market -- and to develop new delivery systems through nonprofit organizations and other institutions to increase affordable housing production. Public and tribal agencies, and for-profit and nonprofit sponsors are all eligible. Rental, owner occupied and special needs projects of any size maybe financed under this program during any stage of the development process. New construction, conversion and acquisition/rehabilitation projects may be financed.

#### ***Section 515 Multifamily Housing Preservation Revolving Loan Fund***

This program provides loans to rehabilitate housing currently financed by Rural Development through its multifamily housing loan program under Sections 514, 515, and 516 of the Housing Act of 1949. This initiative is supported by funds provided by USDA Rural Development in the amount of \$2 million. MFA is providing matching funds equal to \$550,000. Eligible borrowers include nonprofit organizations, for-profit

organizations, governmental housing agencies, regional housing authorities, governmental entities, governmental instrumentalities, tribal governments, tribal housing agencies and other entities. Applicants must have ownership or site control of an eligible Section 514, 515, or 516 property.

#### ***Ventana Fund***

The Ventana Fund is a Certified Development Financial Institution (CDFI) established in 2014 to meet the critical need for an increased supply of early stage financing for affordable housing construction and rehabilitation projects in New Mexico. It is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation organized by private citizens and housing professionals who are dedicated to increasing the number of decent affordable homes available to New Mexico’s lower-income residents. Ventana Fund is committed to financing affordable housing in low-income communities, economically distressed communities, and market niches that are underserved by traditional financial institutions. Target markets include low-income populations earning less than 80% AMI), tribal communities, rural communities, and CDFI investment areas. Ventana Fund also focuses on hard-to-finance projects, such as older rental projects needing rehabilitation.

#### ***542(c) FHA-Insured Multifamily Risk Sharing***

This program provides construction and permanent loans for affordable rental developments. Risk Share loans may be used as credit enhancement for bond transactions. Loans up to \$2,000,000 may be funded by MFA and are designed to minimize transaction/ due diligence costs and expedite processing for small projects. Eligible borrowers include single asset mortgagors including non-profit organizations, for-profit corporations, joint ventures, limited liability companies and partnerships. This program is available for new construction, substantial rehabilitation, refinancing or acquisition of projects having no less than five units per site.

#### ***New Mexico Affordable Housing Tax Credit***

The New Mexico Affordable Housing Tax Credit program encourages private investment

in affordable housing by providing donors to qualified housing developments with a credit on their state taxes. The donation must be made to an affordable housing development that has been approved by MFA. Donors receive investment vouchers for up to 50% of the value of the donation, which they can use towards a tax deduction on their New Mexico state taxes. Eligible projects include the development of single family homes and multifamily rental housing throughout New Mexico.

***Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)***

This program provides federal income tax credits to individuals or organizations that develop affordable housing through either new construction or acquisition and rehabilitation. The tax credits provide a dollar for dollar reduction in the developer’s tax liability for a ten year period. Tax credits can also be used by nonprofit or public developers to attract investment to an affordable housing project by syndicating, or selling, the tax credit to investors. In order to receive tax credits, a developer must set-aside and rent restrict a number of units for occupancy by households below 60% of area median income. These units must remain affordable for a minimum of 30 years. In addition to tax credits, the financing “gap” for certain LIHTC projects may be filled with a below market rate HOME loan. Tax credits and rental HOME loans are awarded annually through a competitive application process according to the state’s Qualified Allocation Plan.

Contact: New Mexico Mortgage Finance  
Authority  
344 Fourth Street SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
Phone: (505) 843-6880  
Website: [http://www.housing.org/  
developers/low-income-housing-  
taxcredits/lihtc](http://www.housing.org/developers/low-income-housing-taxcredits/lihtc)