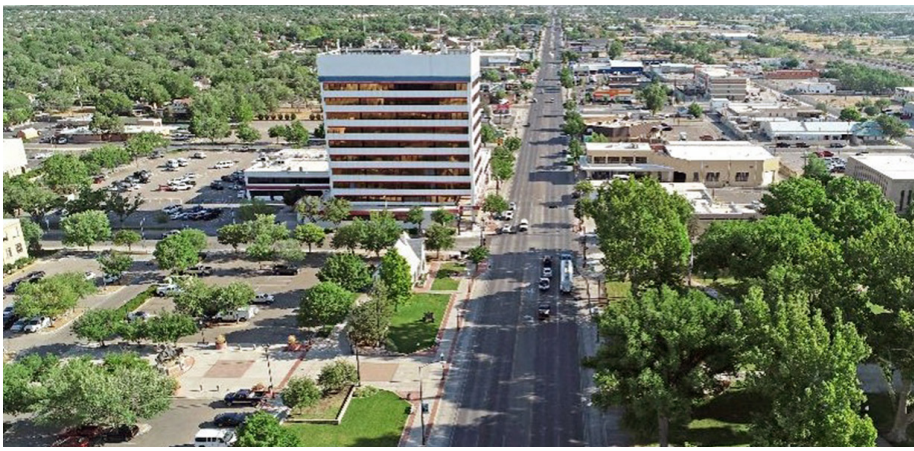
CHAVES COUNTY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN







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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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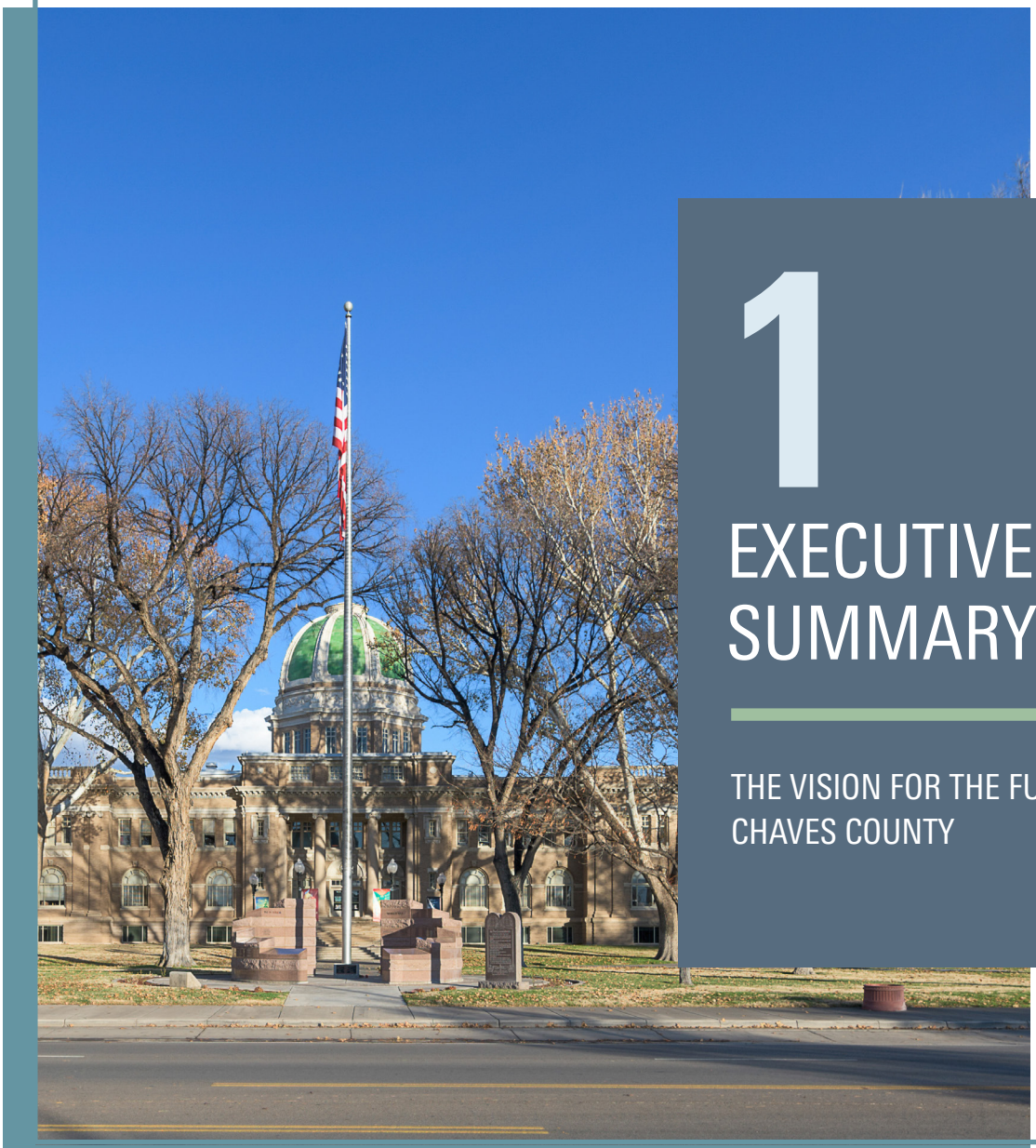
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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF CHAVES COUNTY

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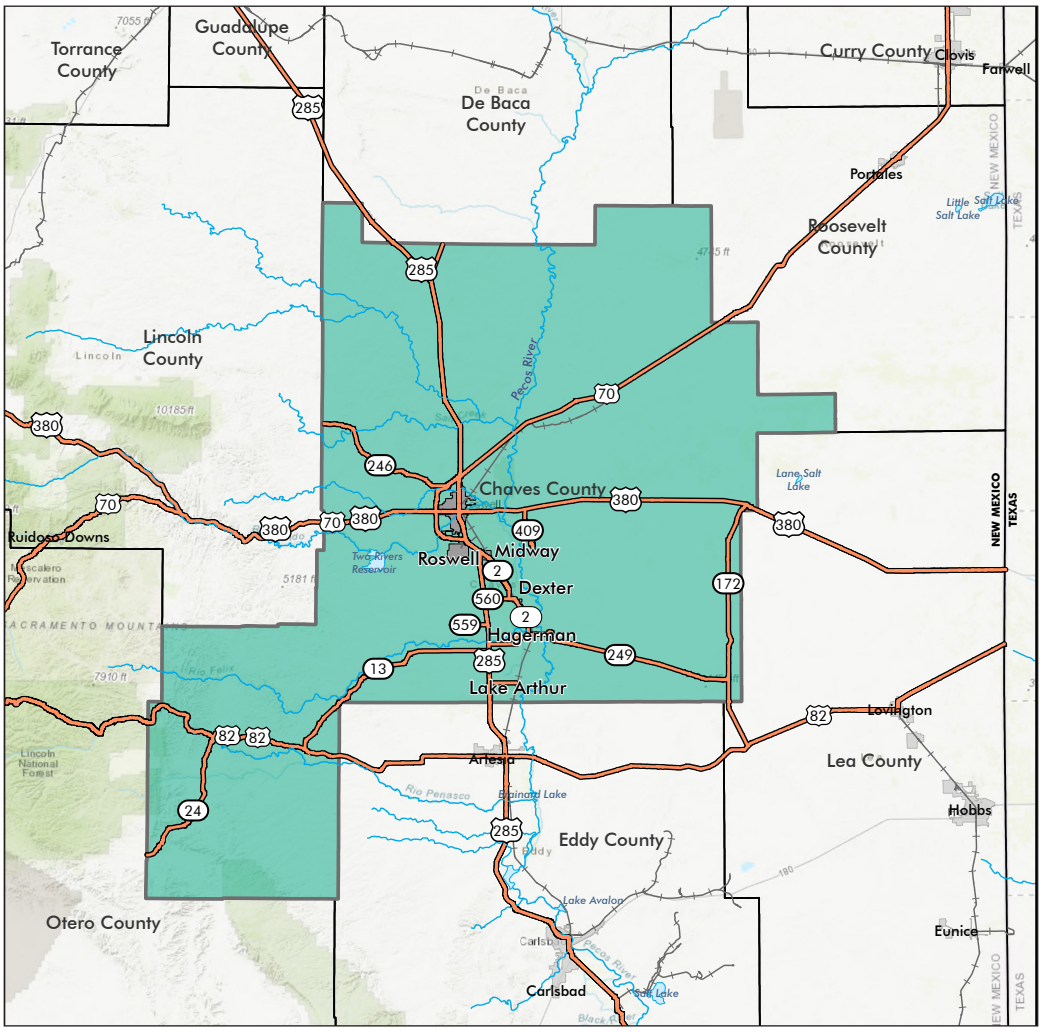
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1.1 INTRODUCTION

The *2026 Chaves County Comprehensive Plan* is the overarching policy document intended to guide and manage decision-making related to the future growth and physical development of Chaves County. It addresses the entire geographical area of Chaves County and the critical elements that support community growth and development. The *Comprehensive Plan* addresses a wide range of community issues and provides a 20-year vision to guide future growth and capital expenditures based on community priorities. It is also intended to foster coordination between the Board of County Commissioners, state and federal agencies, and elected officials in the four municipalities of Roswell, Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur. The update to the *Comprehensive Plan* was initiated by the Board of County Commissioners in July 2025, and completed in June 2026.

Chaves County is located in southeast New Mexico and is approximately 6,065 square miles in area. It is bordered by De Baca County to the north, Otero County and Eddy County to the south, Roosevelt County and Lea County to the east, and Lincoln County and Otero County to the west.



Chaves County vicinity map.

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1.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The acknowledgement and utilization of the following guiding principles will help ensure the continued relevancy and successful implementation of the *Chaves County Comprehensive Plan:*

- The *Comprehensive Plan* should be reviewed on a regular basis and updated every five years. Chaves County should establish a schedule to review the *Comprehensive Plan* on an annual basis to ensure it stays relevant.
- Updates to the *Comprehensive Plan* should include and be tied to a public engagement process that seeks to engage a wide cross section of the community.
- The County's Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) should be linked to the priorities and actions related to physical improvements contained in the *Comprehensive Plan.*
- Chaves County should continue to monitor and identify funding sources and programs that could be utilized for implementation of capital improvements identified in the *Comprehensive Plan.*
- Chaves County should base future grant applications and funding requests on the actions identified in the *Comprehensive Plan.*

1.3 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MISSION & VALUES

The mission statement, developed during the 2002-2004 planning process, remains relevant in 2026. It provides a benchmark for developing goals, objectives, and actions that are specific to Chaves County.

CHAVES COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MISSION STATEMENT

"Chaves County is a growing, diverse community characterized by the strongest agricultural industry in New Mexico, where friendly people have All-American Hometown values with a progressive attitude. Chaves County's goal is to provide the highest quality of life for future generations by encouraging development that is respectful of community desires, values, custom & culture; utilizing existing economic assets; while recognizing individual property rights. With input from the community and cooperation from other entities, Chaves County will promote and facilitate a Comprehensive Plan that has the flexibility to react to the future growth of the County and surrounding region."

The *Comprehensive Plan* respects the integrity of the bundle of rights and liberties that are bestowed on all citizens of the United States by the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution. This respect is balanced by the Chaves County leadership's desire to create an environment where the rights of all Chaves County residents are respected and where land use promotes the health, safety, and welfare of all.

The Board of Chaves County Commissioners recognizes the fundamental rights of mankind as enumerated in the Declaration of Independence and acknowledges the limited nature of government as intended by the nation's founding fathers.

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Based on these cherished traditions, all natural resource and land use planning decisions affecting Chaves County will be guided by the principles of protecting private property rights, protecting and sustaining valuable natural resources, protecting local customs and culture, maintaining traditional economic structures through coordination, definition, and self-determination, and opening new economic opportunities through reliance on free markets. Resource decisions made in this manner will sustain or enhance the environmental quality of Chaves County.

UNDERSTANDING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The *Comprehensive Plan* expresses the programs and policies necessary for Chaves County to fulfill its statutory responsibility to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Chaves County. (Sec.4-37-1 NMSA 1978 as amended). Within the jurisdictional boundaries of Chaves County are various types of land ownership, industries, and federal and state agency authorities. The *Chaves County Comprehensive Plan* is the unifying planning document that takes into account all the complementary and competing interests, providing planning directives that best ensure existing and future needs for the purpose of promoting public health, safety, and welfare.

The *Comprehensive Plan* is intended and designed to be used and referenced by Chaves County residents, Chaves County Commissioners, Extraterritorial Zoning Commission, Chaves County Zoning Commission, Chaves County Land Council, County staff, and elected officials from each of the four incorporated municipalities within Chaves County. The *Comprehensive Plan* provides a strong and unambiguous statement of the need for state and federal agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Homeland Security, Office of the State Engineer, State Land Office, New Mexico Department of Agriculture, and the New Mexico Department of Transportation, to become familiar with the *Comprehensive Plan* and establish an ongoing dialogue with Chaves County and coordinate their activities.

Legal Basis for the Chaves County Comprehensive Plan

The legal basis for planning at the county level is derived from New Mexico Statute:

> *"All counties are granted the same powers that are granted municipalities except for those powers that are inconsistent with statutory or constitutional limitations placed on counties. Included in this grant of powers to the counties are those powers necessary and proper to provide for the safety, preserve the health, promote the prosperity and improve the morals, order, comfort and convenience of any county or its inhabitants. The board of county commissioners may make and publish any ordinance to discharge these powers not inconsistent with statutory or constitutional limitations placed on counties."* [Sec. 4-37-1 NMSA 1978 as amended]

In addition, State Statute describes the purpose of a comprehensive plan:

> *"....The plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding and accomplishing 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 economy in the process of development."* [Sec. 3-19-9 NMSA 1978 as amended]

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1.4 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN THEMES

There are several common planning themes that run throughout the *Comprehensive Plan* and are addressed in the goals, objectives, and actions in the Plan elements. These planning themes are as follows:

Preserving Custom and Culture: Preservation and recognition of the "custom and culture" of Chaves County is a primary theme reflected throughout the *Comprehensive Plan.* Any proposed actions on federal or state trust lands must consider the impacts to the economy and agricultural heritage in Chaves County. The *Comprehensive Plan* underscores the critical need for ongoing and open communication, consultation, and coordination between state and federal agencies and Chaves County.

Chaves County expects that all plans, policies, and programs carried out within the jurisdictional boundaries of Chaves County will respect private property rights as guaranteed by the United States Constitution. The Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to the Constitution provide that private property shall not be taken for a public use without payment of just compensation and without due process. The Supreme Court of the United States has examined those constitutional protections and affirmed that such taking shall not occur.

Maintaining Chaves County as a Agriculture Powerhouse: Chaves County is a major agriculture producer within New Mexico. While legacy industries, such as dairy farming, have declined in recent years, the *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes that agriculture and ranching are an integral part of Chaves County's custom and culture, and underscores the important role Chaves County has in striving to increase its agricultural output, cultivate new and sustainable modes of farming practices, and support the expansion of value-added agriculture.

Protecting Water Resources: The need to stay vigilant in protecting and conserving Chaves County's surface and groundwater supplies, both for drinking water and agriculture purposes, touches all aspects of life in Chaves County. The *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes these challenges, particularly in light of the ongoing drought throughout New Mexico, by supporting the development of new water treatment facilities, promoting the installation of packaged wastewater systems for new and existing residential development, supporting the use of produced water and treated effluent for irrigation and land applications, and continued metering of wells throughout Chaves County.

Strengthening the Economy: The economy of Chaves County is strong but reliant on a few major industries; therefore, there is a need for diversification. The *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes Chaves County's important role in promoting the Roswell Air Center (RAC), supporting the expansion of aviation technology, working with ENMU-Roswell, Roswell Independent School District (RISD), and New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI) on workforce training initiatives and promoting economic diversification that will allow Chaves County households to reach and maintain higher levels of prosperity. Expanding access to healthcare, allowing for the responsible development of renewable energy projects, and identifying and promoting

appropriate locations within the ETZ and the greater Chaves County area for new and expanded industries, are important initiatives that Chaves County, along with the City of Roswell, should work on to strengthen and serve the community, which in turn will help encourage County youth to remain in or return to Chaves County.

Increasing and Diversifying Housing: The housing stock within Chaves County is relatively old and limited to single-family homes. The community identified the need for more affordable housing and expanding the type of housing available as a major concern. The *Comprehensive Plan* recognizes that increasing housing types will help serve young families and others who cannot or may not want to maintain a large property but still want to live in a rural community.

Consistency and Management of Land Use and Development: Chaves County must stay proactive and make adjustments in how it addresses land use development. The County's land development ordinances should be updated for consistency with the *Comprehensive Plan,* particularly in regard to allowing small lot subdivisions at appropriate locations within the Extraterritorial Zone (ETZ) that have access to municipal services and creating siting and development standards for renewable energy projects and other types of industrial and commercial development. Code enforcement is another important aspect of community life that is important to increasing the quality of life in Chaves County.

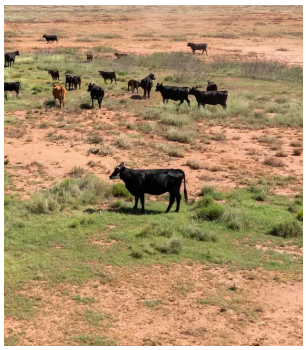
1.5 PLAN OVERVIEW

The *Chaves County Comprehensive Plan* contains 10 chapters, which include:

- Executive Summary (Chapter 1)
- County Profile (Chapter 2)
- Public Lands (Chapter 3)
- Land Use (Chapter 4)
- Code Enforcement (Chapter 5)
- Economic Development (Chapter 6)
- Housing (Chapter 7)
- Transportation (Chapter 8)
- Water, Wastewater, and Drainage (Chapter 9)
- Implementation Plan (Chapter 10)

The *Comprehensive Plan* is supplemented by appendices that contain a Glossary of Terms, Community Survey Results, and Funding Sources. With the exception of the Implementation Plan, each of the major plan elements contain a profile of existing conditions, discussion of issues and opportunities, and goals, objectives, and actions that are intended to synthesize and convey the vision for the future of Chaves County.

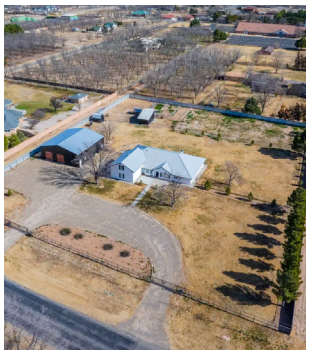
A brief summary of each of the major elements of the *Comprehensive Plan* is provided on the following pages.



PUBLIC LANDS

The Public Lands element (Chapter 3) addresses the impact that federal and state managed lands have on Chaves County's policy priorities, stability, and custom and culture. With substantial federal and state managed lands, it is essential to Chaves County that these lands continue supporting grazing, agriculture, recreation, and mineral extraction. The chapter explains Chaves County's statutory authority in land use planning and the requirement of federal agencies to coordinate with local governments under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the National Forest Management Act (NFMA). It emphasizes the importance of safeguarding private property rights while maintaining multiple use access to public lands.

The Public Lands goals, objectives, and actions address the need to protect Chaves County's custom and culture by incorporating it into policies of federal and state agencies; protecting private property rights and the use of state and federal lands for grazing, agriculture, mineral extraction, and recreation; protecting public safety and preventing damage to public and private land in Chaves County; promoting proper stewardship of natural resources; and the continued use of mineral resources as a vital part of Chaves County's custom and culture and economy.



LAND USE

The Land Use element (Chapter 4) provides the framework for guiding future growth and development in Chaves County, and emphasizes the preservation of agricultural lands, management of rural residential land use, and the need to balance private property rights with development. Agriculture and rural residential land uses are the primary land uses in Chaves County, with most commercial and industrial development located within the Roswell-Chaves County Extraterritorial Zone (ETZ). The chapter highlights the primary land uses of agriculture, rural residential, commercial, industrial, and surface mining and extraction. It provides an overview of land development regulations; emerging land uses, such renewable energy production and storage; land use issues; ETZ cooperation between Chaves County and the City of Roswell; land use recommendations; and a *Future Land Use Map,* which is a graphic version of how Chaves County intends to direct growth and development over the next 20 years.

The Land Use goals, objectives, and actions address protecting, preserving, and promoting agriculture through legislative changes and incentives; maintaining and supporting the mining and oil and gas industries through the development of siting and buffering standards; directing commercial and industrial development to appropriate locations identified on the *Future Land Use Map* and revising existing land development regulations; protecting property values by encouraging more attractive development and compatibility with existing land uses; supporting multi-generational housing by allowing accessory dwelling units; creating a more

modern process and requirements for new residential subdivisions; promoting the responsible installation, operation, and decommissioning of utility-scale renewable energy facilities through the development of zoning performance standards; providing a rational transition at the urban-rural interface and plan for the extension of urban services in the ETZ; and reviewing and updating ordinances to ensure consistency with the *Comprehensive Plan.*



CODE ENFORCEMENT

The Code Enforcement element (Chapter 5) addresses the challenges of illegal dumping; nuisance properties and structures; and the enforcement of existing land use and building codes across a large geographic area with a limited number of code enforcement staff. The lack of code enforcement is a strong concern of Chaves County residents. While Chaves County has implemented new technologies to improve case tracking and case management, more effort needs to be made to address the issues that come with nuisances, including health and safety risks and diseases, criminal activity, and deteriorating property values.

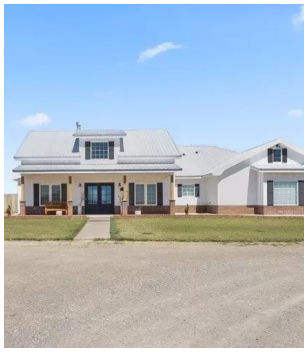
The Code Enforcement goals, objectives, and actions address reducing the amount of illegal dumping by establishing a comprehensive clean-up and community maintenance program; and eliminating public nuisances, including abandoned or dilapidated structures, inoperable vehicles, junk, and weeds, by hiring more code enforcement officers and utilizing software to help County staff track nuisance properties.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development element (Chapter 5) provides an economic profile of Chaves County, including key economic indicators; an industry profile, including key industries, such as dairy and agriculture, oil and gas, educational services and healthcare/social assistance, manufacturing, aviation, and government; economic strengths and assets, including the Roswell Air Center (RAC), Hagerman Industrial Park, arts and culture, agri-tourism, and outdoor recreation; profile of economic development organizations, including the Roswell Chaves County Economic Development Corporation; economic challenges, including water, infrastructure, workforce training, air service, Endangered Species Act, and renewable energy development. Employment and property values in Chaves County provide stability; however, wages continue to lag behind neighboring counties and the statewide average. Aviation at the RAC has emerged as a major driver of economic growth, supported by military testing, aircraft services, and educational partnerships with ENMU-Roswell. The oil and gas industry remains an important economic sector in Chaves County.

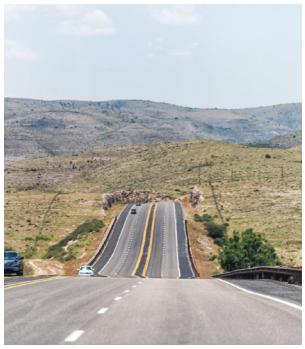
The Economic Development goals, objectives, and actions address supporting efforts to help retain, strengthen, and expand existing businesses and create new jobs and business opportunities by working with regional and state partners, infrastructure planning, and convening business enhancement training forums; enhancing economic development opportunities through developing a business license program and making changes to the permissive land uses contained in the Chaves County Zoning Ordinance; attracting new industries that protect natural resources and the environment through recruitment and marketing; promoting the RAC to support the expansion of existing business development and expand land uses; encouraging development in other industrial centers by using the *Future Land Use Map* and identifying sites, and prioritizing site-readiness; promoting and supporting workforce training through job expos, marketing available programs offered by the New Mexico Economic Development Department, and promoting partnerships with Roswell Independent School District, NMMI, and ENMU-Roswell; promoting and increasing tourism and outdoor recreation, agri-tourism, community events, and coordination with local and regional tourism partners and marketing events; coordinating and securing legal standing with federal and state agencies on endangered species and ensuring economic impacts to Chaves County are an integral part of any recovery plan.



HOUSING

The Housing element (Chapter 7) provides a housing profile that highlights housing units, age, household type, housing occupancy, and tenure; housing costs and affordability for renter- and owner-occupied households and cost-burden; statewide affordable housing policies; and existing housing resources available to Chaves County residents and homeless people. The housing stock in Chaves County is limited in terms of housing types and Chaves County residents have increasingly identified affordable housing as a major concern. There is public support for expanding the type of housing available, including allowing for smaller lot sizes within the ETZ that can access municipal services.

The Housing goals, objectives, and actions address promoting equal access to a diverse range of safe and affordable housing types through creating an Affordable Housing Plan and Ordinance in compliance with the New Mexico Affordable Housing Act and supporting affordable housing organizations by helping to secure grants, advertising, and other in-kind support.



TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation element (Chapter 8) provides an overview of the transportation network in Chaves County, including highways, rail, and air travel. Chaves County contains 1,440 miles of grave or dirt roads, which the County maintains through a multi-year scheduling process. The floods of 2024 challenged Chaves County resources as low-water crossings and bridges suffered severe damage. This chapter provides a profile of Chaves County roads

and maintenance; profiles of federal and state highways within Chaves County; discussion of and a map showing functional classification of roadways; discussion of traffic and safety issues, including traffic counts and crash data; summary of regional transportation planning efforts by the Southeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SERTPO) and electric vehicle infrastructure; and profiles of the Roswell Air Center (RAC) and the BNSF railway.

The Transportation goals, objectives, and actions address the need to increase roadway safety by improving substandard road conditions and intersections through evaluation of existing conditions, developing a Traffic Management Plan and a preventative roadway maintenance plan, and working with FEMA and the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management; and ensuring the roadway system can accommodate and be compatible with existing and future land use and development by acquiring additional rights-of-way, requiring right-of-way dedication through the development process; and updates to the *Chaves County Subdivision Ordinance.*



WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE

The Water, Wastewater, and Drainage element (Chapter 9) describes the critical role that water quality and supply, wastewater treatment, and drainage has in ensuring the long-term viability and sustainability of life for Chaves County residents. It emphasizes Chaves County's reliance on the Roswell Groundwater Basin to meet its agricultural, municipal, and domestic water needs and describes the importance of protecting the groundwater from contamination. It also underscores the critical role of drainage management in protecting the community from major storm events such as the storm that occurred in 2024. The chapter provides an overview of water supply and distribution, including profiles of the water co-ops and public water systems; water supply challenges related to supply, conservation, and the Pecos River Compact; water planning at the state and regional levels; wastewater treatment and disposal; drainage and FEMA flood areas; and water conservation organizations.

The Water, Wastewater, and Drainage goals, objectives, and actions address the need to protect the quality and supply of water resources through planning and implementation of the *Lower Pecos Regional Water Plan* and regulatory changes; providing for the safe and efficient disposal of liquid waste through monitoring, promoting small package sewage treatment systems; and working with state and local agencies and municipalities; supporting the use of produced water and treated effluent; and ensuring Chaves County is protected from major flood events and emergencies.



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan element (Chapter 10) is intended to provide a system of checks and balances to ensure the *Comprehensive Plan* stays on course and remains relevant into the future. The implementation actions identified in the *Comprehensive Plan* are organized by Plan element and provide a time frame and responsible agency/organization(s) for each action. The time frames are categorized by short-term (2026-2028), medium-term (2029-2033), long-term (2034-2041), and on-going (no end date). The implementation schedule is intended to provide some flexibility to respond to Chaves County's fiscal constraints and staff resources.

1.6 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

STEERING COMMITTEE

Chaves County established a Steering Committee comprised of Chaves County residents, agency representatives, representation from adjacent counties, and County staff. The Steering Committee provided important feedback on what information contained in the previous *Comprehensive Plan* needed to be updated because it was no longer relevant or had been completed, as well as new topics that had not been included previously.

The Steering Committee was also tasked with reviewing and providing comments on the draft goals, objectives, and actions and the final draft of the *Comprehensive Plan* prior to being brought before the Board of County Commissioners. Comments from the Steering Committee were provided to the consultants and revisions were incorporated into the *Comprehensive Plan.*



Steering Committee meeting at the Chaves County Administrative Center.

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COMMUNITY SURVEY

As part of the *Chaves County Comprehensive Plan* update, a Community Survey was conducted to collect input on quality of life, land use, housing, economic development, transportation, public services, and other planning related topics. The Community Survey was available online and in hard copy from September 25, 2025, through November 7, 2025, and garnered responses from residents across Chaves County. The survey results provide a meaningful snapshot of community sentiment and help identify key priorities and concerns to guide future planning and policy decisions. A summary of the Community Survey findings are presented below, with the complete results provided in Appendix B.

Community Profile

- When asked were they lived, 74% of the respondents said "Roswell", followed by 16% in "Unincorporated areas" (16%) and smaller communities such as Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur.
- Longevity in Chaves County is a defining demographic characteristic. When asked how long they had lived in Chaves County, 71% of respondents said "More than 20 years" and 13% said "11 to 20 years". Only 3% said they lived in Chaves County for "Less than 1 year".
- Of the total people who responded to the survey, 62% identified as "Female"; 55% were within the age category of "25 to 49"; 43% had attained "Some college/ associate degree/vocational certificate; and 37% had a household income of "Over $100,000".

Quality of Life and Community Identity

- When asked what their favorite aspects of living in Chaves County is, 50% of the responses were "Rural lifestyle"; 42% were "Community and people"; and 37% were "Climate".
- When asked to identify the regional attractions that they or their family members currently use, 26% of the responses were "Bottomless Lakes State Park"; 24% were "Lincoln National Forest"; and 12% were "Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge".
- The respondents felt strongly about the visual appearance of Chaves County. When asked what areas of improvement to the visual appearance of Chaves County do they feel are needed, 54% each of the responses were "Streetscapes" and "Residential buildings or properties"; 50% were "Commercial buildings or properties"; 48% were "Reduce litter", and 45% were "Landscaping". Only 2% of the responses were "No areas of improvement needed".

Employment

- Employment levels for respondents were strong. When asked if they were currently employed, 89% said "Yes". Of those, when asked what type of employment they were engaged in, 16% said they were employed in "Government"; 12% said "Finance or insurance"; 11% said "Education"; and 10% said "Agriculture or ranching". Of those who said they were unemployed, the most common reason given at 46% was "Retired".

- When asked what types of programs or classes do they think would best serve the educational needs of youth or adults in Chaves County, the most common response at 37% was "Building trades".
- When asked what were the external factors affecting agriculture and ranching economy in Chaves County, the top responses were 33% for "Cost of supplies"; 24% were "Labor shortages"; and 15% were "Land use management".

Agricultural and Natural Resources

- Agriculture remains central to Chaves County's economy and identity. When asked if they are a farmer or rancher, what types of crops or livestock do they grow or keep, 26% of the responses were "Cattle and calves"; 16% were "Alfalfa, sorghum, silage"; and 13% were "Pecans, nuts". However, 21% said "Other", which included horses, gardens, and poultry.
- When asked what are the external factors affecting agriculture and ranching economy in Chaves County, 33% of the responses were "Cost of supplies"; 24% were "Labor shortages"; and 15% were "Land use management".

Growth and Development

- When asked what they thought was limiting growth in Chaves County, the top responses were 69% for "Quality of healthcare and lack of access"; 53% were "Lack of affordable housing"; 50% were "Need for infrastructure improvements"; and 48% said "Lack of employment diversity".
- When asked their level of satisfaction with commercial retail and services in Chaves County, 5% of the respondents said "Very satisfied" while 52% said "Somewhat satisfied". However, a combined 43% said "Somewhat satisfied" or "Very dissatisfied". The follow up question asked where they go for shopping and commercial services, 64% said "Roswell"; 59% said "Online"; 56% said "Lubbock"; and 44% said "Albuquerque".
- Renewable energy development received mixed reactions. While a combined 50% of residents said they "Strongly agree" or "Agree" with expanding wind, solar, and biofuel industries, a combined 36% said they "Strongly disagree" or "Disagree". When asked what concerns them about renewable energy projects, 43% each of the responses were "Wildlife disturbance" and "Disturbance to the rural way of life". Another 34% of the responses were "Cost of installation".
- When asked what areas of economic development should Chaves County focus on, the options that received the most responses included 64% for "Healthcare services"; 57% for "Retail and commercial services"; 46% for "Manufacturing"; and 39% for "Restaurant and food service".

Transportation and Infrastructure

- Roadway conditions were a particular concern to respondents. When asked what their level of satisfaction with Chaves County's current roadway conditions and maintenance, a combined 62% said "Very dissatisfied" or "Somewhat dissatisfied". Only 38% said "Very satisfied" or "Satisfied". The follow up question asked respondents them their biggest issues with roads; 78% of the responses were "Too many potholes"; 73% said "Roads need resurfacing"; and 37% said "Roads don't have shoulders".

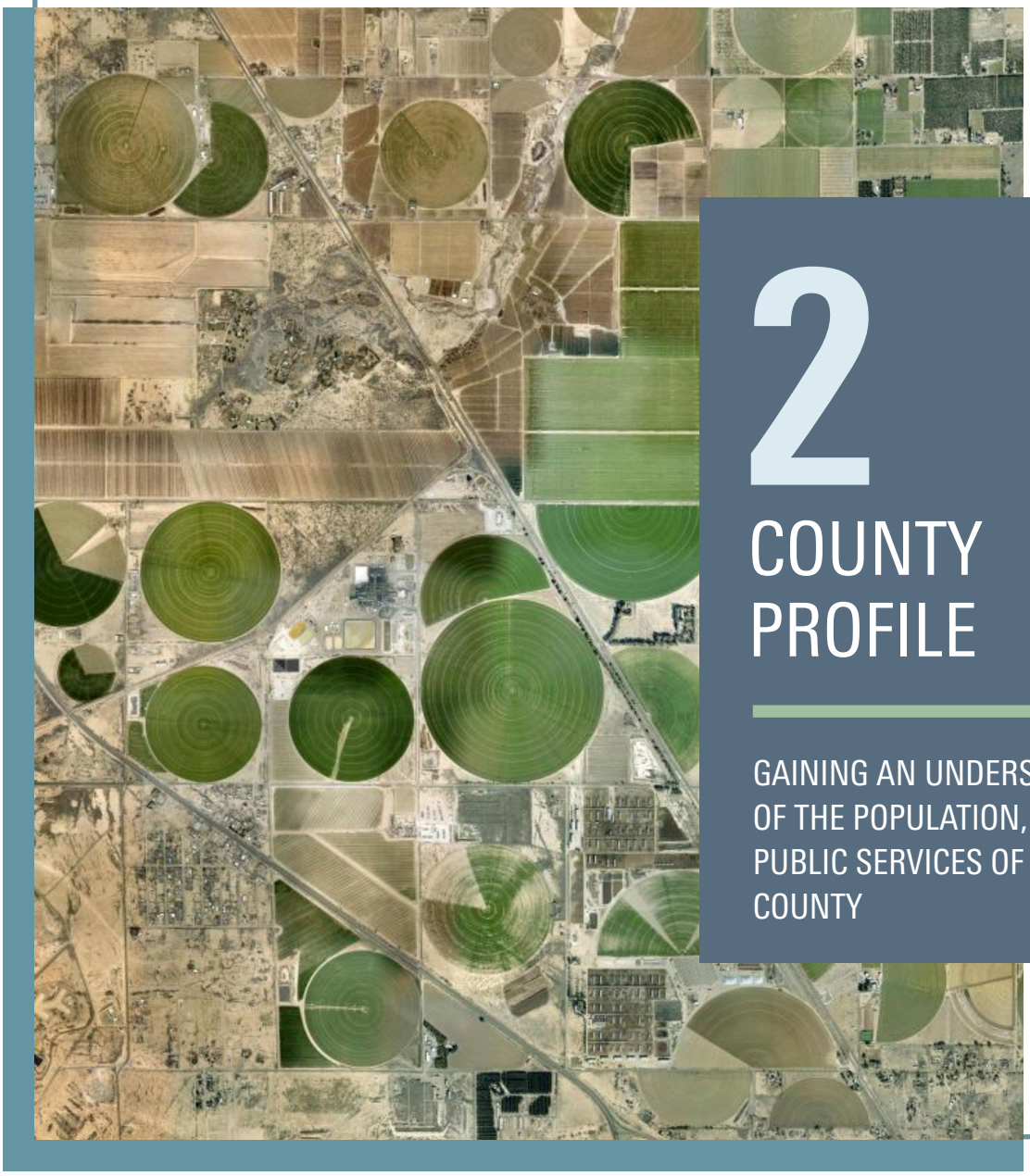
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- When asked how they access drinking water at their home, 60% said "Municipal water system"; 21% said "Private well" and 20% said "Water Association". These concerns point to the importance of long-term water resource planning and capital investment.
- When asked to identify the biggest issues facing Chaves County's water supply, 62% of the responses were "Water systems need updates" and 26% said "Limited water supply for a growing population". However, 15% said "There are no issues facing Chaves County's water supply".

Housing

- Homeownership amongst the respondents was high, with 86% owning or purchasing their homes.
- When asked what housing development types does Chaves County need more of, 30% of the responses were "Affordable housing"; 25% were "Starter homes"; and 19% were "Mixed-income housing". Only 2% of the responses were "None".
- When asked what housing building types Chaves County needs more of, 82% of the responses were "Single-family, detached homes"; 36% were "Apartments"; and 25% were "Townhouses". Only 6% of the responses were "None".

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2 COUNTY PROFILE

GAINING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE POPULATION, LAND, & PUBLIC SERVICES OF CHAVES COUNTY

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

The County Profile chapter contains an analysis of Chaves County's physical traits, and demographic and socioeconomic indicators, such as population and educational attainment, over time. It also contains an overview of hazard mitigation planning, public safety, and community services, all services that Chaves County provides to its citizens to ensure quality of life and the public health, safety, and welfare.

2.2 GEOLOGY & GEOGRAPHY

Chaves County was part of regional mountain building that formed the entire Rocky Mountains range. Volcanic activity about 32 million years ago formed Sierra Blanca to the west in what is currently eastern Otero and Lincoln counties. Approximately 26 million years ago, the Capitan Mountains were uplifted. These large-scale uplifts promoted extensive erosion and deposition from the west to the east during the Tertiary and Quaternary periods to form the present physiography. These geologic processes continue today, although greatly subdued.

The Pecos River has occupied its general location for an estimated 12 million years. The Pecos River is, in part, responsible for the floodplain that forms the Chaves County portion of the Pecos Valley and provides the fertile soil that supports extensive agriculture. Interesting geological features in the Pecos Valley include the Bottomless Lakes, which are not bottomless but about 90 feet in depth, and located south and east of Roswell. The Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge is located north and east of Roswell. Lake Van is located east of Dexter, which is also the home of the Dexter National Fish Hatchery.



Bitter Lake, Oxbow Trail.

The Chaves County area is replete with solutional caves and some collapsed features developed in the exposed Permian-age limestone and gypsum layers. The Permian and older rocks underlying Chaves County, part of the vast Permian Basin, are prolific producers of oil and natural gas.

The average elevation in Chaves County is 4,234 feet above sea level. One Tree Peak is the highest point in Chaves County with an elevation of 7,090 feet. The average elevation of Roswell is 3,573 feet.

Location

There are two main transportation corridors in Chaves County, including US 285, which runs north and south connecting to Interstate 40, north of Vaughn, and Interstate 10, south of Carlsbad. US 70/380 runs east and west, connecting Roswell

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to Clovis and Lubbock, Texas to the east, and Ruidoso and Alamogordo to the west. Air travel is available from the Roswell Air Center, which is located on the south end of Roswell.

Roswell is the regional hub and the largest urban area in the southeastern portion of the state. It is also the largest employment center and source of consumer goods and services to residents within a 120-mile radius.

2.3 POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

According to the most recent US Decennial Census count in 2020, Chaves County's total population was 65,157. Unincorporated Chaves County comprises approximately 22% of the total population. The vast majority (74.3%) of the population is based in Roswell, a community of 48,422 people. In addition to Roswell, Chaves County is home to the incorporated communities of Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur (*see Table 2.1*).

TABLE 2.1: CHAVES COUNTY POPULATION

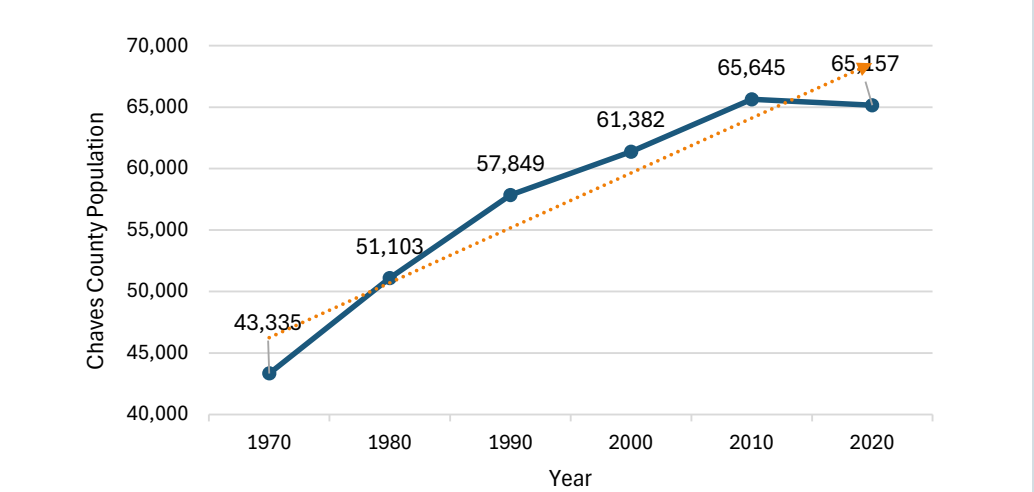
Place	2020 Population	% of Population
Chaves County (total)	65,157	100%
Unincorporated Chaves County	14,308	22.0%
Roswell	48,422	74.3%
Dexter	1,074	1.6%
Hagerman	975	1.5%
Lake Arthur	378	0.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census.

Between 1960 and 1970, Chaves County experienced a steep decline in population, primarily due to the closing of Walker Air Force Base in 1967 *(see Figure 2.1).* Since 1970, Chaves County has grown at a slow and steady pace up to the 2010 population of 65,645, after which it decreased slightly in 2020 to 65,157. The annual average rate of growth over the 50-year period was 1.3%, with 12.6% overall growth.

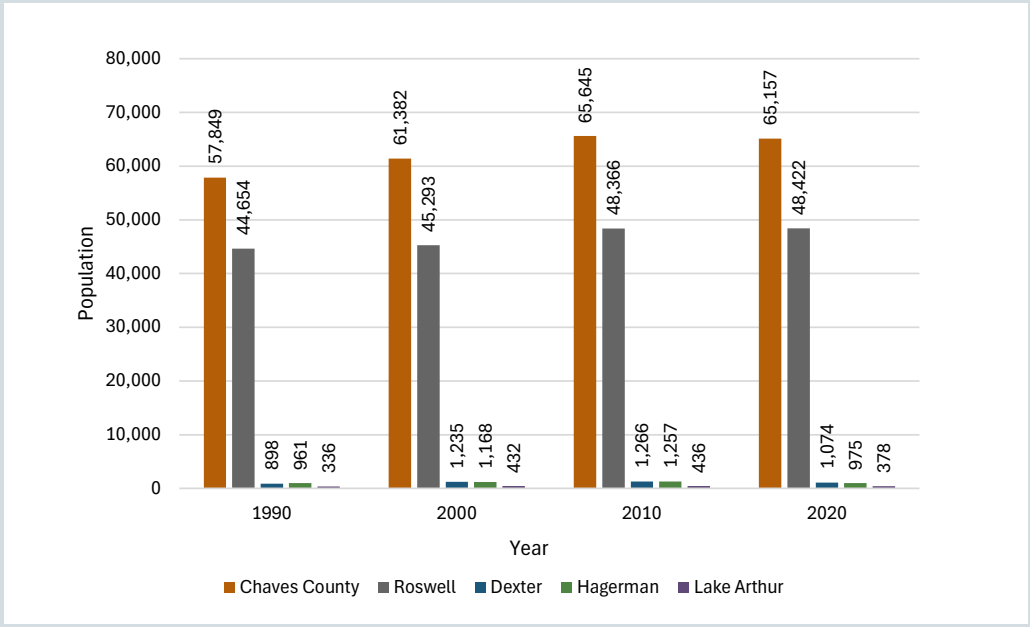
Figure 2.2 illustrates the change in population for Roswell, Dexter, Lake Arthur, and Hagerman. Aside from Roswell, the three other municipalities in Chaves County were incorporated in 1990, and between 1990 and 2020, Chaves County experienced overall growth of 12.6%, and increased by 7,508 people. During the same period, Roswell grew by 8.4% (an increase of 3,768 people), Dexter grew by 19.6% (an increase of 176 people), Hagerman grew by 1.5% (an increase of 14 people), and Lake Arthur grew by 12.5% (an increase of 42 people).

FIGURE 2.1: CHAVES COUNTY HISTORICAL POPULATION



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census 1970-2020.

FIGURE 2.2: INCORPORATED COMMUNITIES HISTORICAL POPULATION



Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 1990 – 2020.

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Age Distribution & Gender

Age distribution in Chaves County shifted between 2010 and 2020, with only five of the age cohorts experiencing an increase *(see Table 2.2)*. The 65 to 74 year-old cohort grew by 30.2%, the strongest among all cohorts, suggesting that the Chaves County population is aging in place and may be attracting more retirees. In comparison, growth in this cohort was more pronounced in New Mexico, with an increase of 55.3%.

Growth in Chaves County was also evident in the 35 to 44 year-old cohort, which increased 11.7%, and the 10 to 14 year-old cohort, which grew by 8.3%. The cohort with the largest decrease was the Under 5 cohort, which declined by 20.9%, followed by the 45 to 54-year old cohort, which declined by 18.5%.

TABLE 2.2: AGE DISTRIBUTION, 2010 & 2020

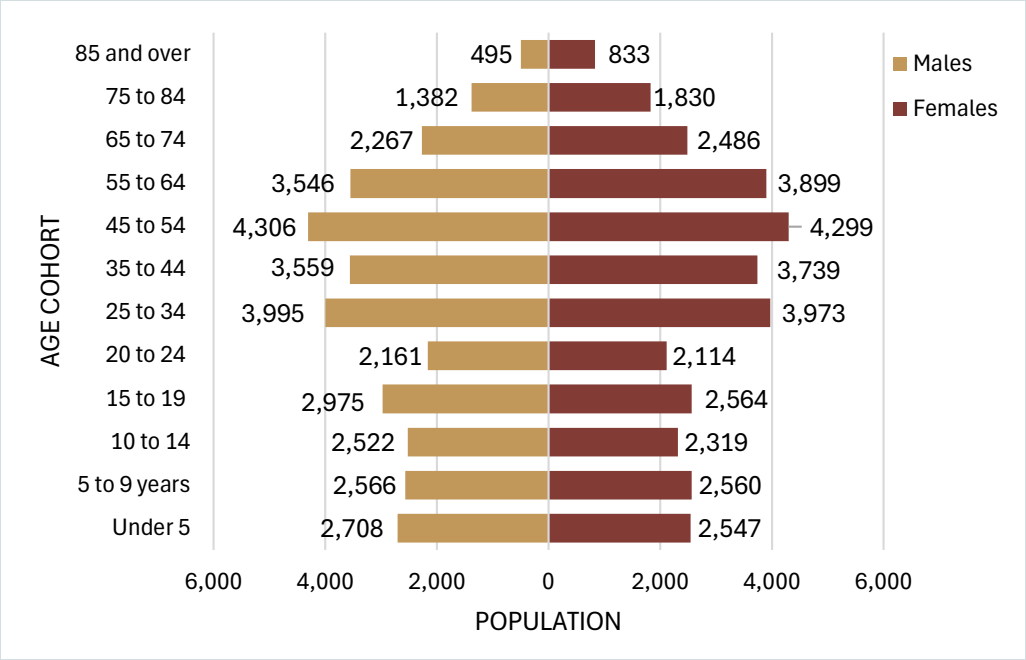
Age Cohorts	2010	2020	% Change
Total population	**65,645**	**65,157**	**-0.7%**
Under 5	5,255	4,158	-20.9%
5 to 9 years	5,126	4,711	-8.1%
10 to 14 years	4,841	5,241	8.3%
15 to 19 years	5,539	5,008	-9.6%
20 to 24 years	4,275	4,078	-4.6%
25 to 34 years	7,968	8,434	5.8%
35 to 44 years	7,298	8,154	11.7%
45 to 54 years	8,605	7,014	-18.5%
55 to 64 years	7,445	7,983	7.2%
65 to 74 years	4,753	6,190	30.2%
75 to 84 years	3,212	2,993	-6.8%
85 years and over	1,328	1,193	-10.2%
Male	32,482	32,524	0.1%
Female	33,163	32,633	-1.6%
Median Age	34.7	36.1	4.0%
18 years and over	47,262	47,971	1.5%
65 years and over	9,293	10,376	11.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census.

In 2020, the median age in Chaves County was 36.1 years, a moderate increase from the 2010 median age of 34.7 years, and significantly lower than the median age for New Mexico as a whole. This increase is consistent with the pattern of an aging population throughout New Mexico, where it increased from 36.7 years to 39.2 years. The lower median age in Chaves County is a positive sign, indicating a higher proportion of children and young adults among the population.

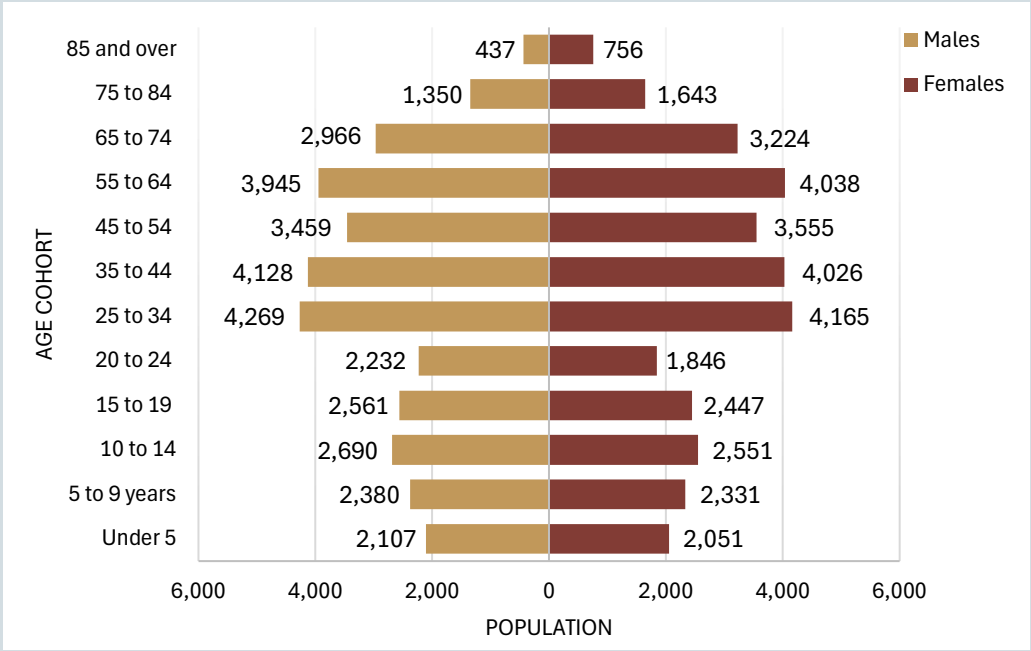
Figures 2.3 and 2.4 provide a graphic representation of gender by age cohort in 2010 and 2020. In general, males and females in 2020 were nearly equally represented in Chaves County. The largest cohorts in 2020 amongst both age and gender are 25 to 34, 35 to 44, and 55 to 64 years old. Among those aged 75 years and older, the female population is larger than the male population, which is common in most communities.

FIGURE 2.3: POPULATION BY GENDER, 2010



Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 2010.

FIGURE 2.4: POPULATION BY GENDER, 2020



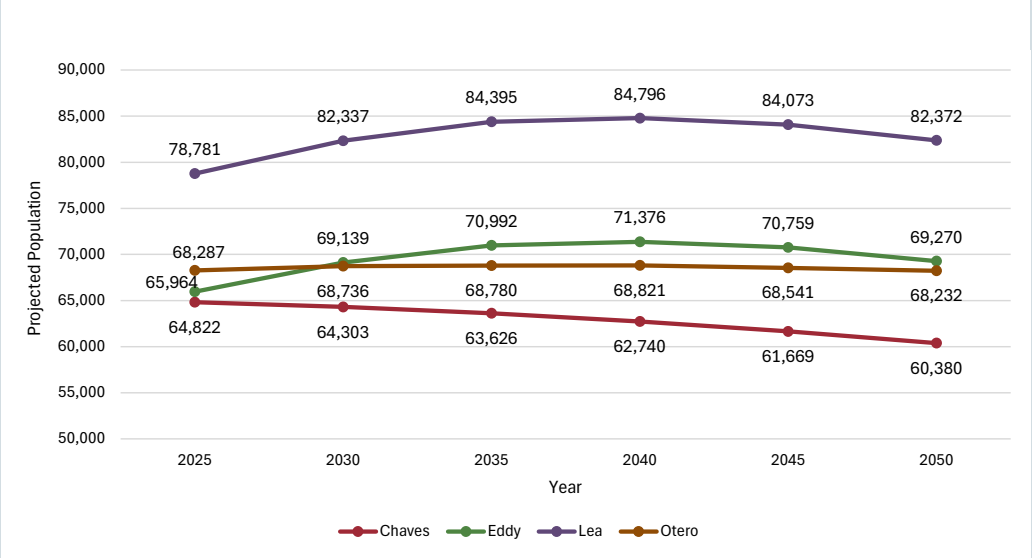
Source: U.S. Decennial Census, 2020.

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Population Projections

The University of New Mexico Geospatial and Population Studies provides population projections on a county level to 2050 (*see Figure 2.5*). The projections are calculated in 5-year increments from 2025 through 2050 and anticipate a downward trend in population for Chaves County. On average, the County population is projected to decline every 5 years, with an overall growth rate of -1.4%. New Mexico's population is anticipated to grow through 2040, after which a decline is projected towards 2050, with an overall growth rate of -0.4%. Neighboring Eddy and Lea counties' population projections are similar to those of the state and are projected to grow through 2040, after which a slight decline is projected.

FIGURE 2.5: POPULATION PROJECTIONS, 2025-2050



Source: UNM Bureau of Business & Economic Research (BBER).

Race & Ethnicity

The U.S. Census Bureau provides categories for residents to self-identify the ethnicity and race or races with which they most align. Ethnicity options are limited to whether someone is of Hispanic or Latino origin, which includes people of all races.

The American Community Survey (ACS) 2023 5-year estimates show the Hispanic or Latino population represented 57.9% of the population in Chaves County, and the Not Hispanic or Latino population represented 42.1%. For comparison, the New Mexico statewide breakdown between Hispanic or Latino and Not Hispanic or Latino populations were 48.2% and 51.8%, respectively. The majority, 63.9%, of the population in Chaves County identified their race as White, which was followed by 19.6% of the population that identified as having Two or More Races, a category that has seen increased recognition and acceptance in recent years. These are also the top two race categories throughout New Mexico, at 53.6% and 20.9%, respectively.

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Poverty Rates

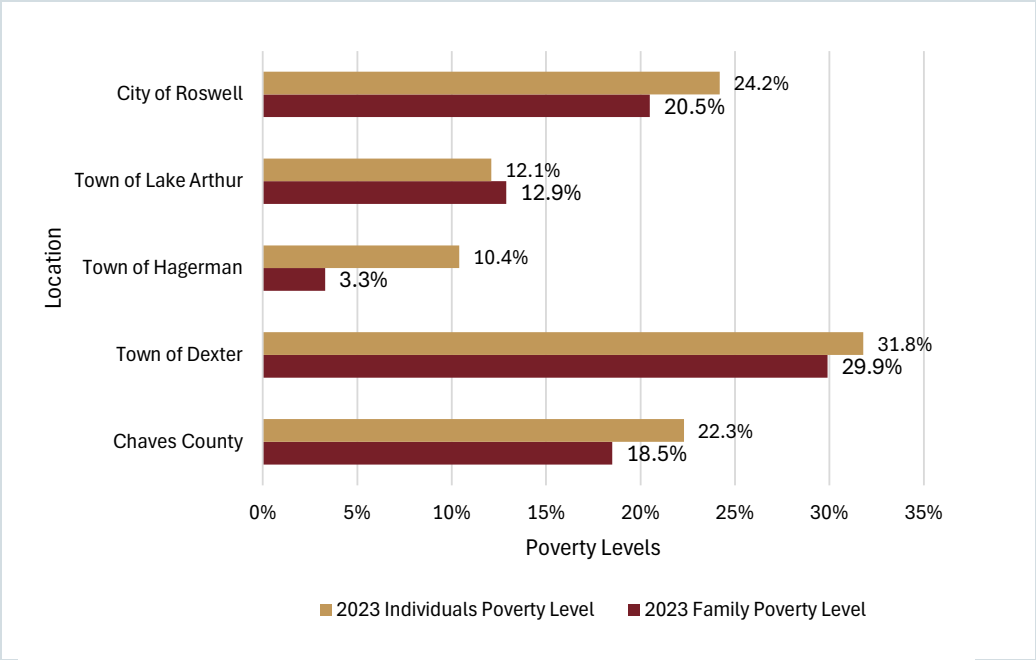
Poverty rates provide an indicator of the well-being of a community. The US Census Bureau tracks poverty by family and by individual. Figure 2.6 illustrates poverty levels for Chaves County, Roswell, Hagerman, Dexter, and Lake Arthur. Chaves County showed an individual poverty rate of 22.3% and a family poverty rate of 18.5%. Of all the communities, a larger portion of Dexter families are living in poverty as compared to the other communities, and Hagerman had the lowest poverty rates for both individuals and families.

TABLE 2.3: RACE AND ETHNICITY	2013	2023	% CHANGE
Total Population	**65,627**	**64,446**	**-1.8%**
White	80.0%	63.9%	-21.6%
Black or African American	1.7%	1.5%	-11.0%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1.5%	0.9%	-37.4%
Asian	1.0%	1.3%	32.7%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.1%	(D)	25.6%
Some Other Race	12.6%	12.7%	-1.4%
Two or More Races	3.2%	19.6%	494.9%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	52.8%	57.9%	7.7%
Not Hispanic or Latino	47.2%	42.1%	-12.4%

Source: ACS, 5-year Estimates, 2013 and 2023.

* Percent change calculated on raw numbers.

FIGURE 2.6: POVERTY LEVEL, 2023



Source: ACS, 5-year Estimates, 2023.

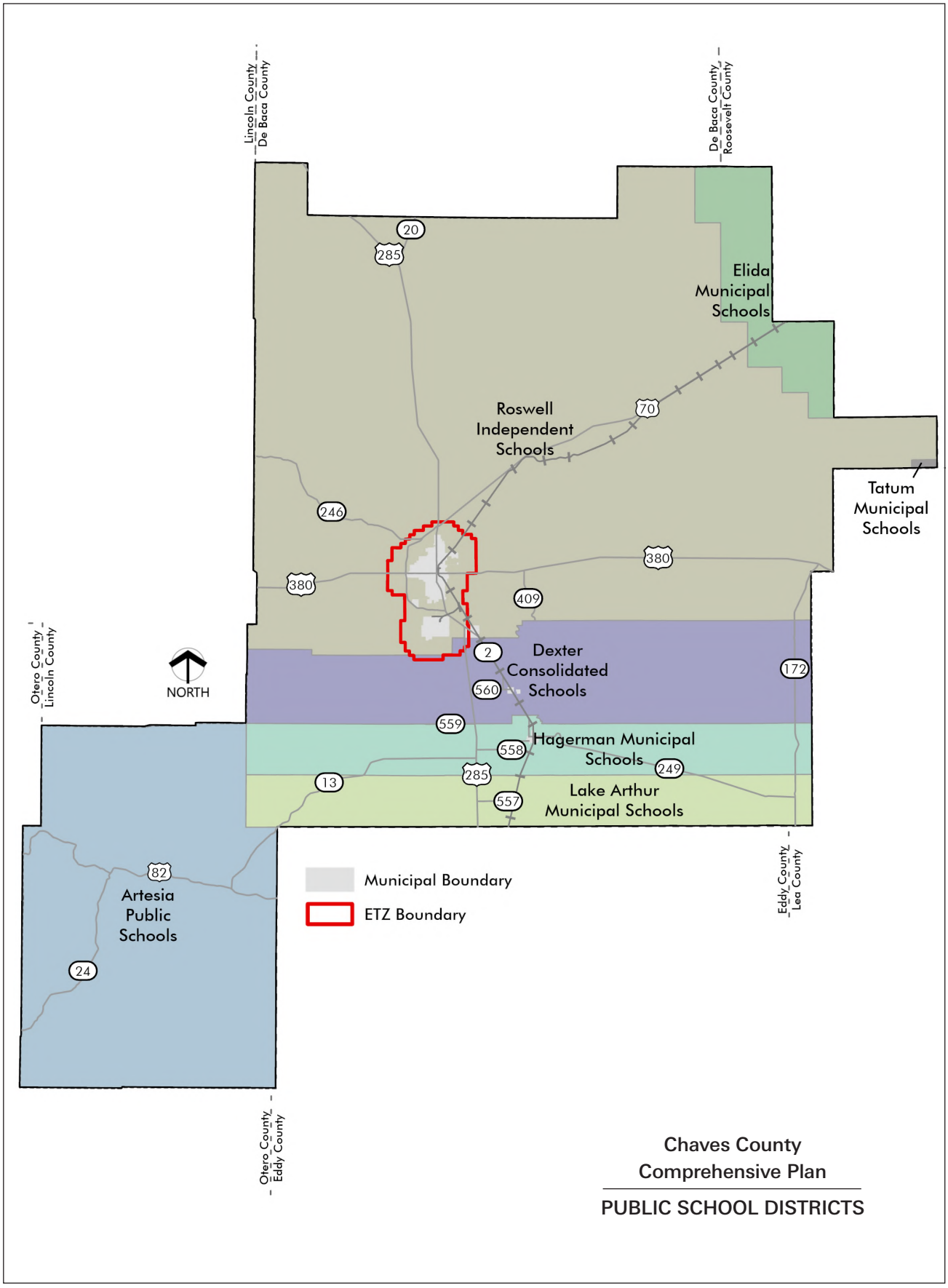
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2.4 EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Chaves County is served by four primary public school districts, including Roswell Independent School District, Dexter Consolidated School District, Hagerman Municipal School District, and Lake Arthur Municipal School District. In addition, Artesia Public School District, Tatum Municipal Schools, and Elida Municipal Schools extend into Chaves County; however, none of these three school districts operate school facilities within the County. A brief description of each public school district is provided below.

- Roswell Independent School District: The Roswell Independent School District covers an area of 3,187 square miles, the seventh largest school district in land area of the 89 school districts in New Mexico. Schools include 20 traditional school facilities (12 elementary schools, four middle schools, three high schools, one charter middle school) and one special alternative school. Student enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year was 9,385. The 2023 graduation rate was 70.7%.
- Dexter Consolidated School District: Dexter Consolidated School District covers an area of 683 square miles and includes one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school located on a single campus. Enrollment for the 2023-24 school year was 805. The graduation rate in 2023 was 90.0%, the highest of the four school districts serving Chaves County.
- Hagerman Municipal School District: Hagerman Municipal School District covers an area of 400 square miles. The three schools within the district are located on a single campus at 406 Cambridge Avenue in Hagerman. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year was 406 students. In 2023, the graduation rate was 80.0%.
- Lake Arthur Municipal School District: Lake Arthur Municipal School District covers an area of 399 square miles and includes one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year for Lake Arthur Municipal School District was 143 students. In 2023, the graduation rate was 76.7%.
- Artesia Public Schools District: The Artesia Public School District includes a small portion of southeastern Chaves County within its boundary, which is served by Peñasco Elementary, a K-8 school located near the Town of Hope in Eddy County. Enrollment for the 2023-2024 school year at Peñasco Elementary was 19 students. Artesia Public Schools enrollment was 3,734 students. In 2023, the graduation rate was 79.9%.
- Tatum Municipal Schools and Elida Municipal Schools: These two school districts extend into eastern Chaves County. Students in these areas can attend public school at the elementary, middle, and high school facilities within their respective municipalities. Total enrollment for the 2023–2024 school year was 310 students in Tatum Municipal Schools and 150 students in Elida Municipal Schools.


Lincoln County
De Baca County
De Baca County
Roosevelt County
20
285
Elida
Municipal
Schools
Roswell
Independent
Schools
70
Tatum
Municipal
Schools
246
380
380
409
Otero County
Lincoln County
NORTH
2
Dexter
Consolidated
Schools
172
560
559
Hagerman Municipal
Schools
558
249
285
13
Lake Arthur
Municipal Schools
557
Eddy County
Lea County
82
Artesia
Public
Schools
24
Municipal Boundary
ETZ Boundary
Otero County
Eddy County
Chaves County
Comprehensive Plan
PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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HIGHER EDUCATION

Chaves County residents can choose from two higher education institutions located in Roswell, including the Eastern New Mexico University at Roswell (ENMU-R) and the New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI).

- Eastern New Mexico University: ENMU-R was established in 1967 when Walker Air Force Base was closed, which led to the designation of 241 acres of land and numerous buildings. In 1982, a five-year building plan began, and ENMU-R moved out of the old Air Force buildings into new facilities. Construction of new buildings and renovations have continued to the present, including the most recent renovation of bathrooms, pipes, and sewer systems in three buildings on campus.

  ENMU-R offers more than 70 certificates and associate degrees in a variety of academic and career-oriented programs. Selected bachelor's and master's level courses are also available through the main campus in Portales. A customized training program, Center for Workforce and Community Development, is available for business and industry. Each semester, ENMU-Roswell enrolls more than 3,000 students in credit-earning courses and a variety of non-credit classes and numerous community partnerships.

- New Mexico Military Institute: NMMI was founded in 1891 and is the oldest military institution in the southwest. It is a state-supported, nationally-accredited, college preparatory military boarding high school and one of only five military junior colleges. NMMI offers a two-year military commission program for the U.S. Army and the U.S. Air Force. NMMI's high school program is rigorous and well-regarded, with over 98% of graduates going on to either a four-year college or continuing their education at NMMI. NMMI's junior college provides a comprehensive liberal arts curriculum.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Educational attainment is a key community measurement that is linked to an individual's social and economic mobility, health, and wellbeing, and is a catalyst for driving long-term economic growth. In Chaves County, overall educational attainment trended upwards between 2013 and 2023.

In Chaves County, the highest growth rate in educational attainment was among those earning an associate's degree. This represented a 25.3% increase, which was but still lower than the New Mexico's increase of 31.4% (*see Table 2.5*). This increase in educational attainment may be attributed to New Mexico's tuition-free programs, such as the Opportunity and Lottery Scholarships, which support first-time and returning adult students at public colleges and universities, including ENMU-R.

TABLE 2.5: CHAVES COUNTY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, 2013 & 2023			
	2013	2023	% Change
Population 25 years and over	**40,677**	**41,989**	**3.2%**
Less than 9th grade	4,673	3,649	-21.9%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	4,382	4,353	-0.7%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	10,893	11,569	6.2%
Some college, no degree	10,193	10,933	7.3%
Associate's degree	3,067	3,843	25.3%
Bachelor's degree	4,885	4,671	-4.4%
Graduate or professional degree	2,584	2,971	15.0%
High school graduate or higher	31,606	33,987	7.5%
Bachelor's degree or higher	7,484	7,642	2.1%

Source: ACS, 5-year Estimates, 2013 & 2023.

According to the New Mexico Higher Education Department, since the Opportunity Scholarship Act was signed in 2022, college enrollment in New Mexico has risen each year, culminating in a total growth of 9.7% in 2025. Enrollment of branch colleges, such as ENMU-R, which offer associate's degrees and professional certificates, has notably risen by 15.1%.

Between 2013 and 2023, Chaves County also experienced a 15.9% increase in the attainment of graduate or professional degrees and a 2.1% increase in the attainment of bachelor's degrees or higher. While these are lower than New Mexico's respective growth in educational attainment of 32.4% and 13.0%, they show that residents of Chaves County are pursuing higher education and training. This upward trajectory will contribute to the overall prosperity of Chaves County residents in the future.

2.5 HAZARD MITIGATION

Hazard mitigation is a crucial part of planning in Chaves County, which should be coordinated with land use and development, infrastructure, and transportation systems. The Chaves County Office of Emergency Management is the primary source for emergency planning and hazard planning. The following is a summary of the current *Chaves County Hazard Mitigation Plan*, which was completed in 2022.

CHAVES COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

The *Chaves County Hazard Mitigation Plan* is a multi-jurisdictional hazard mitigation strategy developed to assess and reduce risks from natural and human-caused hazards in Chaves County, City of Roswell, and the towns of Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur. It complies with FEMA and state requirements under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and the Flood Insurance Reform Acts of 2004 and 2012.

The *Hazard Mitigation Plan* identifies the hazards evident in Chaves County and provides a risk assessment, which is summarized below:

- Drought: Highly likely; 21 years of drought since 2000
- Extreme Heat: Possible; record high 114°F
- Severe Storms: Likely; includes hail, wind, lightning
- Tornadoes: Possible; EF2 tornado in 2019 caused $2M damage

- Winter Storms: Possible; 2015 blizzard caused $200M damage.
- Expansive Soils: Likely in some areas; long-term structural damage.
- Dam Failure: Unlikely; Two Rivers Dam rated "high hazard", but no failures recorded.
- Flooding: Possible; approximately 50 events since 1996; $958K damage.
- Wildfire: Likely; 15,651 acres burned between 2015 and 2020.
- Dam Failure: Unlikely but high potential impact due to Two Rivers Dam.

To address these risks, the *Hazard Mitigation Plan* outlines a mitigation strategy focused on prevention, property protection, natural resource conservation, structural projects, emergency services, and public education. Twenty-five specific mitigation actions are identified in the *Hazard Mitigation Plan*, ranging from installing early warning systems and backup power for critical facilities to enhancing public outreach and updating flood control infrastructure.

The *Hazard Mitigation Plan* also includes a capability assessment, evaluating each jurisdiction's planning, technical, fiscal, and political capacity to implement mitigation measures. Chaves County and Roswell scored highest, indicating strong readiness, while the smaller municipalities of Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur demonstrated moderate capabilities with room for growth.

The *Hazard Mitigation Plan* establishes procedures for ongoing maintenance, integration with other local plans, and continued public engagement. Annual reviews, stakeholder meetings, and updates will ensure the plan remains relevant and effective in guiding the County's resilience efforts.

To improve its response to emergency situations, Chaves County established an Emergency Manager position in 2025 and plans to collaborate with the City of Roswell on an Emergency Management Plan in 2026. These proactive measures will prepare Chaves County to effectively respond to emergencies, such as wildfires and severe flooding, including the 2024 flood that caused extensive damage in Downtown Roswell and the surrounding areas.

2.6 PUBLIC SAFETY

CHAVES COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The Chaves County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement duties for Chaves County. The Sheriff's Office is located at the Chaves County Administrative Complex in Roswell. An auxiliary station in Hagerman is used for special events.

The Sheriff's Office employs 56 staff, including one Sheriff, one Undersheriff, 16 administrative staff, and 38 Patrol and Investigative Deputies. Specialized trained personnel includes two K-9 handlers, a dedicated DWI officer, special investigations, and animal control.

The Sheriff's Office includes the following seven divisions:

- Public Records
- Public Records Division

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- Animal Control Division
- Civil Process Division
- Property and Evidence Division
- Criminal Investigations Division
- Court Security Division
- Civil Division

Emergency calls are handled through the Regional Dispatch Center. Chaves County has a Joint Powers Agreement with the City of Roswell to handle 911 calls for the area.



Chaves County Sheriff's Office.

CHAVES COUNTY DETENTION CENTER

The Chaves County Detention Center provides detention and supervision for individuals with law violations. The Detention Center includes adult facilities and an officer training academy.

The Detention Center provides three Court Services components:

- Misdemeanor Compliance: Oversees probation or DWI Compliance.
- Electronic Monitoring or INTV: Oversees individuals sentenced to monitoring through electronic devices such as bracelets or ankle monitors.
- Community Services: Oversees individuals sentenced to community services by the Court.

CHAVES COUNTY FIRE SERVICES

The Chaves County Fire Services includes eight fire departments across the County, seven of which are volunteer departments, including:

- Berrendo Fire Department: Two fire stations, one sub-station, 23 personnel; ISO Rating 6/9
- District 8 Volunteer Fire Department: One fire station located at the State Correctional Facility, 15 members; ISO Rating 6/9
- Dunken Volunteer Fire Department: One fire station, 23 members; ISO Rating 7
- East Grand Plains Volunteer Fire Department: One fire station, 22 members; ISO Rating 6/8B
- Midway Volunteer Fire Department: One station, 22 members; ISO Rating 6
- Rio Felix Volunteer Fire Department: One station, member number unknown; ISO Rating 9
- Peñasco Volunteer Fire Department: One station, 24 members; ISO Rating 9
- Sierra Volunteer Fire Department: One station, 32 members; ISO Rating 7/9

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In 2025, Chaves County created a Fire Service Director position and an Emergency Manager. The role of the Fire Services Director will be to manage the eight Volunteer Fire Departments acting as the County Fire Marshal. Tasks will include managing budgets, operations, policies, procedures, and emergency services. The Director will ensure compliance with Chaves County laws and work with staff, elected officials, general public, and other agencies within Chaves County.

Chaves County Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The *Chaves County Community Wildfire Protection Plan* was updated in 2014 to address evolving wildfire risks due to population growth, expansion into wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas, and changing fuel conditions. Developed collaboratively by a Core Team of over 20 agencies and informed by public surveys, the *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* aligns with the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) and aims to protect life, property, and community values. The following is a summary of the *Community Wildfire Protection Plan:*

Key Findings

- Wildfire Risk: GIS-based modeling shows most of Chaves County faces moderate risk, with high to extreme risk in riparian zones and the boot heel region.
- Fire History: Over 1,000 fires occurred between 1993–2013, the largest being the Enterprise Fire in 2011, which burned 64,936 acres.
- Vegetation & Fuels: Grasslands dominate Chaves County, but invasive species like salt cedar increase fire intensity in riparian areas. Several years of drought followed by intense rain has spurred growth in the grasslands, exacerbating the risk of wildfires.
- Fire Response: Eight volunteer fire departments and four municipal departments have improved ISO ratings and resources since 2010.

Recommendations

- Fuels Reduction: Targeted thinning of weeds and overgrowth, mowing, prescribed burns, and invasive species control—especially in high-risk areas.
- Public Education: Firewise workshops, defensible space campaigns, and emergency preparedness outreach.
- Structural Ignitability: Encourage homeowners to retrofit buildings, clear debris, and maintain defensible space.
- Firefighting Capacity: Expand training, equipment, water storage, and interagency coordination.

The *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* focuses on reducing wildfire risk in the long term through targeted projects and ongoing monitoring. Targeted projects are prioritized based on risk and community input to ensure resources go where they are most needed. Monitoring includes photo documentation and vegetation inventories to measure effectiveness and ecological impact. Since wildfire conditions change over time, the *Community Wildfire Protection Plan* should be updated with new data and feedback, ensuring Chaves County remains proactive and resilient against future threats.

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2.7 COMMUNITY SERVICES

JOY CENTERS OF CHAVES COUNTY

The JOY Centers of Chaves County were established in 1982 to provide support and services to individuals aged 60 and older in Roswell, Hagerman/Dexter, Lake Arthur, and the Midway Center in Dexter. Services are focused on assisting individuals with independent living, enhancing well-being, and enriching quality of life. The following services are provided at each JOY Center:

- Congregate Meals
- Home delivered meals
- Information, assistance, and outreach
- Case management
- Transportation
- Disease prevention and promotion of health
- Housekeeping

In addition to senior services, the JOY Centers also provide the following free adult daycare services Monday through Friday:

- Therapeutic activities
- Individualized plan of care
- Qualified well-trained staff
- One meal per day and snacks
- Transportation
- Secure environment
- Community referrals

The Joy Centers offer volunteer opportunities through the Senior Companion Program and the Foster Grandparent Program. The Senior Companion Program allows seniors 55 and older to participate in caregiver activities and coordination of social programs. The Foster Grandparent Program works with local organizations and public schools to assist children with special and exceptional needs on social interaction, schoolwork, and recreational activities.



JOY Center, Roswell.

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3 PUBLIC LANDS

ENSURING THE CUSTOM AND CULTURE OF CHAVES COUNTY IS MAINTAINED AND RESPECTED

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3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chaves County residents depend on access to, and the multiple uses of, public lands as directed through federal and state statutes. It is essential that full and continued use of the natural resources within Chaves County's boundaries be maintained in order for the County to have the financial strength to provide the necessary services the residents rely on. When the use of these resources is restricted or eliminated, the economy shrinks and essential services are reduced. All activities that occur on public lands within Chaves County must be closely coordinated with Chaves County government in order to ensure such harm does not occur. This means ensuring that Chaves County and government agencies coordinate and share information on an ongoing basis to avoid conflicting policies or strategies, and to ensure the coordinated and efficient delivery of services to the residents of Chaves County.

EXISTING LAND USE

Chaves County encompasses 6,067 square miles (approximately 3,882,880 acres). Land ownership within Chaves County falls into three categories, including federal, state, and private lands *(see Public Lands map, page 38)*. Uses on public land include grazing, recreation, and mineral extraction activities. Federal land comprises approximately 34% (1,303,439 acres) of the total land area and is managed by a number of agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation, and the US Military. State land comprises approximately 26% (1,019,653 acres) and is managed by the New Mexico State Land Office. The remaining land, approximately 40% (1,756,952 acres), is in private ownership (shown as white on the Public Lands map).

CHAVES COUNTY LAND COUNCIL

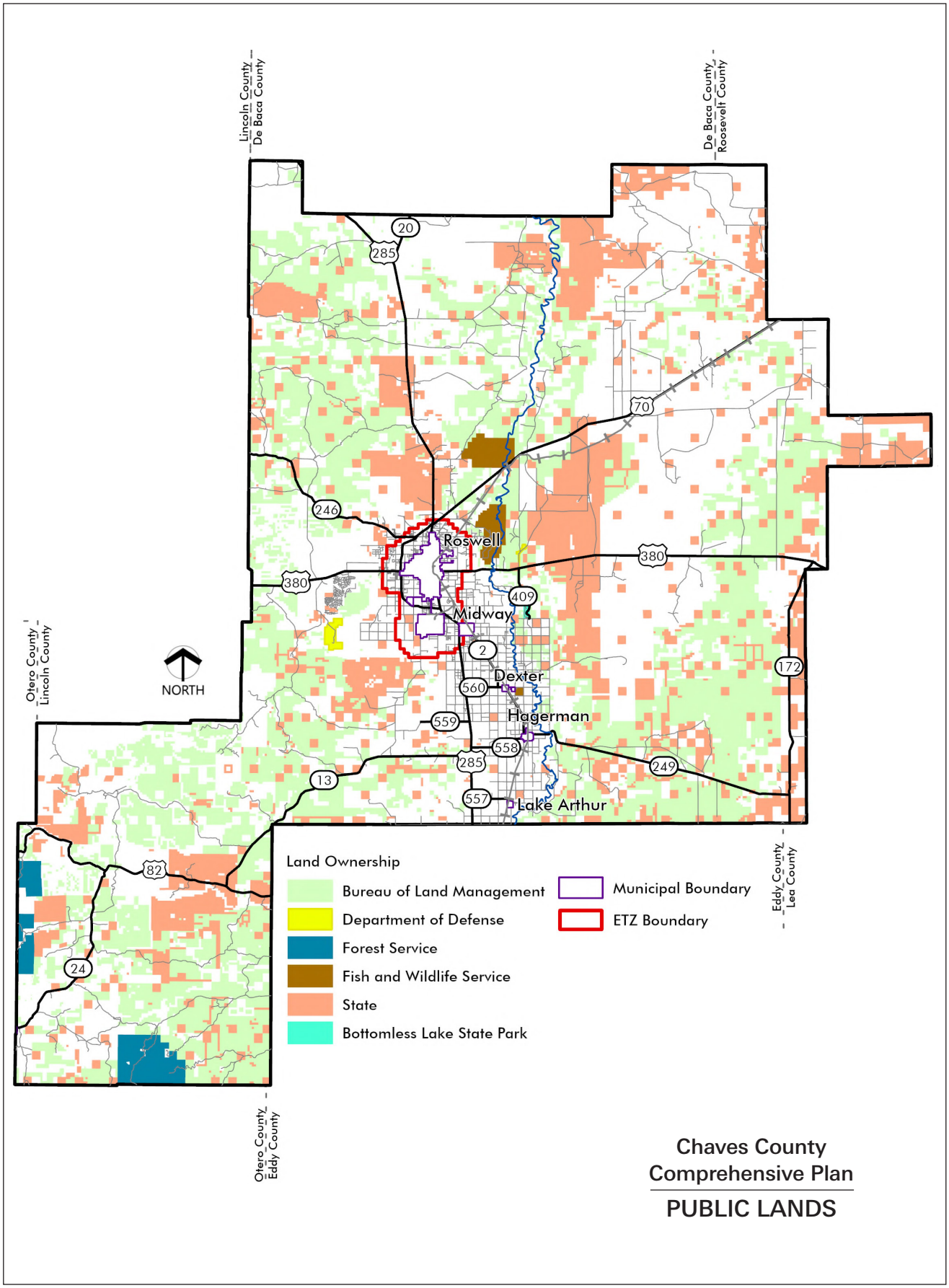
On September 28, 1994, the Board of Chaves County Commissioners appointed nine members to the Public Lands Advisory Committee (PLAC). On July 24, 2014, the PLAC was renamed as the Chaves County Land Council (CCLC). More recently, the CCLC was reduced to six members, including two members that represent agricultural interests, two members that represent oil and gas interests, and two members that represent recreational interests. The terms of each interest group are staggered so that one-third of the CCLC members are appointed annually. The CCLC members review issues dealing with federal and state trust lands in Chaves County and advise the Commissioners on public land matters.

3.2 LAND USE & JURISDICTIONAL ISSUES

FEDERAL & STATE LAND

Approximately 60% of the land within Chaves County is owned by federal and state interests. However, Chaves County has the statutory responsibility to provide community services, such as schools, hospitals, law enforcement, and infrastructure to the entire area within its political boundaries. The federal land management statutes recognize that in lieu of tax income from the federal property, the lands would be productively utilized for mining, oil and gas extraction, grazing, farming, recreation, and other uses that support the local economy.

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Lincoln County
De Baca County
De Baca County
Roosevelt County
Otero County
Lincoln County
NORTH
Otero County
Eddy County
Eddy County
Lea County
Roswell
Midway
Dexter
Hagerman
Lake Arthur
20
285
70
246
380
380
409
2
172
560
559
558
285
249
13
557
82
24
Land Ownership
Bureau of Land Management
Department of Defense
Forest Service
Fish and Wildlife Service
State
Bottomless Lake State Park
Municipal Boundary
ETZ Boundary
Chaves County
Comprehensive Plan
PUBLIC LANDS

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Much of the private land in Chaves County provides the base of operations for the productive uses of the public lands, such as livestock grazing. Given the inherent relationship between federal, state, and private lands, all uses of the federal and state lands are of critical interest to Chaves County, and it is the *Chaves County Comprehensive Plan* that provides policies that consider all these interests in one document to ensure the County's future economic viability and sustainability.

The nature and intent of land use planning in Chaves County is to protect the custom and culture (defined in greater detail later in this chapter) of County residents through the protection of private property rights, the facilitation of a free market economy, and the establishment of a process to ensure self-determination by local communities and individuals. The goals, objectives, and policy actions in this chapter provide a general framework to guide planning on federal and state trust lands.

Chaves County depends upon the continued multiple use of federal lands and maximizing the income from the assets and resources of state lands in Chaves County. Chaves County expects federal and state agencies to coordinate with the County on an ongoing basis regarding all planning and management actions.

COUNTY JURISDICTION

New Mexico State Statutes require counties to prepare plans, programs, and policies for the area within their political jurisdiction, including public lands.

> *"County ordinances are effective within the boundaries of the county, including privately owned land or land owned by the United States. However, ordinances are not effective within the limits of any incorporated municipality."* [Section 4-37-2 of NMSA, "Areas in which county ordinances are effective."]

> *"Each county shall have exclusive planning jurisdiction within its county boundary except as to any area exclusively within the planning and platting jurisdiction of a municipality and except as to those areas where a county and a municipality may have concurrent jurisdiction, as now or may hereinafter be provided by law."* [Section 4-57-3 of NMSA, "Planning Jurisdiction"]

Recognizing the need for federal land management agencies to harmonize their planning process with counties, federal laws, such as the *Federal Land Management and Policy Act, National Environmental Policy Act,* and the *National Forest Management Act,* amongst others, require federal agencies to coordinate their planning processes with counties and work to reach consistency with county plans. Coordination and consistency are required by the federal agencies for the purpose of ensuring the county maintains the ability to fulfill its statutory responsibility to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens.

FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AND POLICY ACT

The *Federal Land Management and Policy Act* of 1976 (amended in 2022), establishes U.S. public land policy and guidelines and administration. It serves as the foundational charter for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and establishes its mission, powers, structure, and responsibilities. It includes the principles of multiple use and sustained yield and sets out how the agency must plan, regulate, and protect public lands.

The key policy goals highlighted by the *Federal Land Management and Policy Act* include:

- Retain public lands in federal ownership unless disposal serves national interest.
- Systematic inventory and coordinated land use planning.
- Protect scientific, scenic, historical, ecological, and cultural values.
- Ensure fair market value for land/resource use.
- Provide payments to states/localities for tax immunity burdens.

Title II of the *Federal Land Management and Policy Act* establishes the framework for planning, inventory, acquisition, exchange, and disposal of public lands. It ensures that land management decisions are systematic, transparent, and aligned with "multiple-use" and "sustained-yield" principles.

The "multiple-use principle" balances grazing, timber harvesting, and recreation while ensuring ecological health. This approach adapts to societal needs and emphasizes responsible stewardship for future generations. The "sustained yield principle" ensures consistent outputs of renewable resources, promoting a balance between resource use and conservation. These principles are intended to maintain productive, accessible lands while delivering lasting economic, ecological, and recreational benefits.

Public involvement is central to *Federal Land Management and Policy Act,* requiring decisions about public lands to include input from communities and stakeholders. The BLM must engage citizens, local governments, and tribal nations through public meetings and advisory councils before developing land use plans.

This engagement applies to major actions like land withdrawals and sales, ensuring transparency and participation in the decision-making process. FLPMA emphasizes early and ongoing collaboration, respecting cultural values while aiming for scientifically sound, economically rational, and democratically legitimate outcomes in public land management.

Congress set forth in the *Federal Land Management and Policy Act* at 202(c) (9), four specific duties the federal agency is to carry out in order to "coordinate" the federal planning and management activities with local governments. These are: (1) keep apprised of local plans; (2) give consideration to local plans; (3) assist in resolving inconsistencies between federal and non-federal plans; (4) provide meaningful involvement of local governments early in the federal planning process. If the conflicts between the federal plans and local government plans are not resolved through this process, then Congress further placed the burden on the federal agency to make its plans consistent with local plans.

In order to help federal and state agencies understand Chaves County's plans, programs, and policies, and incorporate these into their own planning processes, this document should be reviewed by federal and state agencies and inconsistencies identified. Discussion on how to resolve inconsistences with the Board of Commissioners should be held in an open public forum in compliance with the open meeting laws of the state. The purpose of these discussions is to ensure the

harmonious planning and implementation of activities between the county and federal and state agencies.

Special Planning Designations

- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC): These areas are designated by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) through land use planning under the *Federal Land Management and Policy Act* to protect important natural, cultural, or scenic resources and reduce hazards. Anyone can nominate an ACEC, and proposed areas are evaluated based on relevance, importance, and the need for special management. Public input, Tribal consultation, and scientific data guide the process. Activities within ACECs vary by site but aim to conserve identified values while allowing compatible uses such as recreation, education, and sometimes development with added review. After public comment and protest periods, ACECs are officially designated in approved resource management plans.
- Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC): These are public lands that meet criteria for size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation, and may include supplemental values. Under Section 201 of the *Federal Land Management and Policy Act*, the BLM must inventory these lands, but the inventory itself does not change land management. These lands are distinct from designated Wilderness or Wilderness Study Areas and are managed through the land use planning process. During planning, the BLM analyzes how different plan alternatives affect wilderness characteristics and how managing these lands influences other resources and uses, ensuring decisions align with the agency's multiple use mandate.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

In addition to coordination, counties may participate in the preparation of the environmental analysis of a plan, regulation, or other programs under the *National Environmental Policy Act,* as a cooperating agency. The role of counties in this process is to utilize their expertise to help identify the issues that should be analyzed and develop alternatives for the analysis in cooperation with other federal and state agencies, and other affected local governments. The *National Environmental Policy Act* specifically requires that an alternative must be developed and rigorously analyzed that resolves the conflicts with local plans (42 U.S.C. § 4332(E)), and the counties input into this alternative is necessary. However, the cooperative agency process under the *National Environmental Policy Act* does not replace coordination of the plan or the federal agencies obligation to achieve consistency with the local plan as required under the *National Environmental Policy Act* and other statutes, such as the *Federal Land Management and Policy Act* and the *National Forest Management Act.*

NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT

A southwestern portion of Chaves County falls within the Lincoln National Forest and is managed under the *National Forest Management Act* (NFMA) *of 1976*. The *National Forest Management Act* requires the U.S. Forest Service to manage national forest lands through long term, science-based planning that balances multiple uses while protecting environmental resources.

The *National Forest Management Act* requires that Forest Plans guide land use designations, transportation systems, and resource management activities on national forest lands, which influence surrounding county land uses, infrastructure, recreation, watershed conditions, wildfire risk, and local economies. These plans are developed, revised, and implemented through public notice, comment opportunities, and hearings that invite participation from local governments, stakeholders, and residents.

Since federal lands and county communities are closely interconnected, coordination is essential. The *National Forest Management Act's* emphasis on public participation and intergovernmental collaboration is consistent with Chaves County's support for ongoing coordination with the U.S. Forest Service to align land use planning, access, emergency management, watershed protection, and wildfire mitigation efforts. Continued collaboration helps ensure that federal land management decisions are compatible with County goals for public safety, environmental stewardship, and sustainable community development.

COORDINATION & COLLABORATION

Counties may also participate in federal agency "collaboration" processes where stakeholders work together to develop plans that may or may not be pursued by the federal or state agency. "Consultation" is also required by some federal statutes with local governments; however, as with the "cooperative agency" process, neither "collaboration" nor "consultation" replaces the responsibility of the federal agencies to coordinate and reach consistency with the County's plan.

Additionally, federal law requires federal agencies to consider the impacts of actions authorized by these agencies on the natural environment, social structure, and economy of counties. The US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, for example, are both required to consider the impact of their actions on communities adjacent to and/or near federal lands and on employment in the affected areas.

3.3 CHAVES COUNTY CUSTOM & CULTURE

The term "custom and culture" is an integral part of the Land Use element contained in the *Chaves County Comprehensive Plan* because it helps to define and enhance the County's position concerning federal and state trust lands within Chaves County. Federal land use planning laws and regulations require all federal agencies to consider the impacts from proposed actions on the social structure and economy of an affected area. Federal agencies have accepted the term "custom and culture" in the context of land use planning as synonymous with social structure and economy.

In land use planning, Chaves County defines culture as:

> *"The body of customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits constituting a distinct complex of traditions of a racial, religious, or social group that includes knowledge, belief, morals, law, customs, opinions, religion, superstition, and art."*

Adding the term "custom" in the context of land use planning refers to land uses and practices that have acquired the force of tacit and common consent. This essentially means that certain land uses have historically helped shape the values, attitudes,

and traditions of Chaves County residents by providing them ways to earn a living, offering recreation, or by providing them places to live. These traditional land uses, which help to define the "custom and culture" of Chaves County, include grazing/ranching, agriculture, mineral extraction, and recreation, and are still active today. They are being supplemented by the more recent alternative energy technologies of wind and solar generation and battery storage.

Grazing has always played a prominent role in the history of Chaves County, and as a practice, has been utilized by many residents. Livestock grazing and ranching was the one of the original economic engines in Chaves County beginning in the Pecos Valley in the 1860s. The practice of grazing was an activity of the early Hispano and Anglo settlers alike, forging a major component in the early economic history of Chaves County. Grazing has always been more difficult in an area like Chaves County due to its hot summers and sporadic rainfall, requiring more land for livestock to graze. Throughout southern and southeastern New Mexico, ranchers would lead their herds to unclaimed public lands to graze, which soon became the norm.

Western expansion and settlement was encouraged by Congress with the passage of a series of Homestead Acts. In 1934, Congress passed the Taylor Grazing Act, which authorized the issuance of grazing permits on vacant unappropriated and unreserved lands constituting a portion of the public domain. Preference in the issuance of grazing permits was given to those landowners engaged in the livestock business, bona fide occupants or settlers, or owners of water rights as may be necessary to permit the proper use of the lands.

The "custom and culture" associated with agricultural production in Chaves County is necessary to the livelihood and wellbeing of its citizens *(see Chapter 4: Land Use for more information regarding agricultural production).* Therefore, it is the intent of Chaves County to protect agricultural land and promote the continuation of agricultural pursuits by protecting private property rights, relying on self-determination, and ensuring open market conditions. However, Chaves County will not support unsound agricultural practices that cause watershed damage, soil erosion, and reductions in water quality.

Dairies are a traditional part of the agricultural community in Chaves County, which is a leader in the state for the number of dairies and cows, pounds of milk produced, and the direct and total dairy revenue. In 2024, Chaves County dairies produced 19.7% of milk in New Mexico, ranking the County second out of New Mexico's 33 counties. The County contained 15 dairy farms with a total of 53,000 cows, producing approximately 99 million pounds of milk, and generating approximately $242 million. According to the USDA, between 2023 and 2024, dairy production decreased in Chaves County by 15.5% and decreased 9% statewide.

Chaves County recognizes that the development of its abundant hydrocarbon and mineral resources is desirable and necessary to the state and nation. It is, therefore, the intent of Chaves County to encourage the practice of responsible mining and mineral resource extraction.

Chaves County also recognizes that outdoor recreation activities have contributed to its "custom and culture". A large amount of public land within Chaves County

provides recreational opportunities to its residents, but recreational use of public lands often causes conflicts with private property rights. Chaves County promotes the continued use of public lands for recreation, but does not intend to permit such recreational use to violate private property rights.

Federal and state trust lands comprise a substantial portion of Chaves County and are used for recreation, grazing, and for mineral extraction. These activities are very important for many Chaves County residents and work in concert with other activities that take place on private land. Together, these activities contribute to the "custom and culture" of Chaves County, which can be defined as all those elements that form the values and morals of County residents, as well as define their sense of place.

Chaves County residents are very much tied to the land. Their shared history is rooted in farming and ranching in the context of a rural atmosphere. The reason that people choose to live in the unincorporated portions of Chaves County is that they still value this lifestyle and wish to maintain the County's rural qualities. Associated with this desire is the belief that the protection of private property rights is extremely important and government, be it federal, state, or local, needs to be respectful of this strongly held value.

Chaves County strives to protect its "custom and culture" and private property rights through the enactment and enforcement of ordinances and is steadfast in its determination that public land use decisions made at the federal and state level do the same. In order to maintain its "custom and culture" and protect private property rights, Chaves County will continue to be involved in land use decisions regarding public lands. The goals, objectives, and implementation policies listed below are intended to help Chaves County direct this involvement. In compliance with federal and state law, all federal and state agencies are directed to use the *Comprehensive Plan* as a guide in the coordination of planning for management of federal and state trust lands within the geographical boundaries of Chaves County.

3.4 CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a private landowner and a land trust or government entity that contains permanent restrictions on the use or development of the land to protect certain conservation values on the property. Conservation easements are recorded as part of the property deed, binding all current and future owners of the land to conservation in perpetuity. Although often considered as an effective tool for the permanent protection of land, a conservation easement comes with many stipulations that greatly affect private property rights and land values; many landowners discover that they are unable to use their remaining property in the way that they want or that its value has decreased after the conservation easement is established. Landowners retain title to their land but continue to pay property taxes and remain subject to the terms of the conservation easement and the imposed restrictions.

While each conservation easement is unique, there are two major types of restrictions found in almost all easements, including a limitation on subdivisions and a limitation on what parts of the property can be developed. Leasing, subdividing,

or repurposing lands with a conservation easement is usually not allowed. A conservation easement can grant public access to the land unless the landowner specifically chooses to restrict access as a part of the agreement; however, the landowner must allow the "owner" of the conservation easement access for routine inspections and must consult the "owner" prior to making improvements on the easement or adjacent lands. It also does not prevent the landowner from mortgaging, leasing, selling, or passing on their land, but subsequent owners are responsible for assuring that the terms of the easement remain forever. A conservation easement does not have to cover the entire property; they can be phased in over time or cover specific areas; however, there can be restrictions imposed on adjacent lands creating buffer zones that were not included in the conservation easement.

The donation of a conservation easement can have tax benefits at the state and federal levels. However, to earn a tax credit, a landowner must donate a conservation easement to a qualified land trust or government entity, who may not have the same perpetual vision as the owner of the land. A landowner may use the credit to reduce state income tax liability and carry forward unused credits for up to 20 years or they may receive cash compensation for the credit by selling all or a portion of it to a third party. Conservation easements may also reduce property and estate taxes, as the property value of the easement and surrounding property can be significantly reduced by the conservation easement.

Endorsing the use of conservation easements in perpetuity may not be appropriate. A conservation easement in perpetuity can never change, which is contrary to the entire *Comprehensive Plan* that is designed to consider multiple beneficial uses upon the land depending upon a variety of factors that can and will change over time. Conservation easements are an option for landowners but clearly do not build upon the custom and culture of Chaves County. Under Guiding Principles for the *Comprehensive Plan (see Section 1.2),* it states that the *Comprehensive Plan* should be reviewed on an annual basis and updated every five years to ensure that it stays relevant.

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3.5 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

PUBLIC LANDS GOAL 1

Preserve and protect Chaves County's "custom and culture" by incorporating it into federal and state trust land use decisions.

Objectives:

- *Objective 1.a: To coordinate with the federal and state agencies to ensure their land use policies and plans are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and other Chaves County land use policies.*
- *Objective 1.b: To ensure the designation of federal and/or state wilderness, park, recreational, or other specially designated areas in Chaves County is compatible with the custom, culture, and economic stability of the County, and are designated to the smallest acreage needed to meet land use goals*
- *Objective 1.c: To coordinate with federal agencies on all efforts to inventory and/or change of land use classifications. These include, but are not limited to, Wilderness Characteristics, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, National Monuments, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Historical Site recommendations. This is necessary to ensure that prior to any federal, state, or local agency making special land use designations, conflicts with the agencies proposed action and Chaves County's plans, policies and programs are resolved. Special land use designations can restrict access and use of lands that are necessary to ensure a robust economy providing the means for Chaves County to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens.*
- *Objective 1.d: To ensure that federal and state agency plans do not increase the total amount of land under federal or state management, and whenever possible, work to increase the amount of private land within Chaves County.*
- *Objective 1.e: To ensure quality information is utilized in all planning and management activities, federal, state, and Chaves County land use data should be jointly shared either informally, or through existing and future Memorandums of Understanding.*

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.1

Chaves County, through the Chaves County Land Council (CCLC), shall transmit a copy of the adopted *Comprehensive Plan* and any future revisions or amendments to all state and federal agencies with management responsibilities within the geographic boundaries of Chaves County.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.2

All federal agencies shall coordinate continuously with the Board of County Commissioners ensuring early notice and discussion of all issues that may impact Chaves County, for the purpose of resolving conflicts prior to the public participation process. It should be noted that "Cooperating agency status", which refers to a formal recognition of involvement in an agency's planning activities, is not equivalent to "coordination" as required by federal government policies and shall not be accepted as such by Chaves County.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.3
Being fully apprised of the County's positions, federal and state agencies shall inform the Board of Commissioners of any potential conflicts with their plans, programs or policies, early in the process and prior to public release of the proposed plans, programs, and policies.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.4
The Board of County Commissioners will work with the federal and state agencies to resolve conflicts between the planning authorities, but shall not approve or endorse any plans, programs, or policies that harm the health, safety, or welfare of Chaves County.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.5
Federal and state planning efforts shall acknowledge Chaves County's position and any conflicts with the County's plans when released to the public, so that the public may also take into account the needs of Chaves County during the public comment and participation processes.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.6
Chaves County shall develop monitoring and compliance standards to evaluate this *Comprehensive Plan* and to ensure consistency between federal and state actions and activities and the land use requirements presented within this Plan.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.7
Chaves County, through the Chaves County Land Council (CCLC), shall establish a mechanism for tracking and reviewing all federal and state land transactions, including land adjustments, purchases, disposals, and exchanges by close consultation, coordination, and cooperation and with full public participation. Local federal agency offices should provide regular updates on all activities and proposed actions on federal lands to the CCLC.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.8
All land and resource inventory processes conducted within the political boundaries of Chaves County shall be coordinated with the County. The County:

- Shall be notified directly by the agency prior to beginning the inventory process;
- Shall have the opportunity to participate fully in the process as allowed by law; and
- Shall have the opportunity to review and identify possible conflicts with the findings of the inventory process at least 120 days prior to public release of the information.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.9
Proposed federal or state specially designated areas shall be presented to the CCLC in a timely manner so that Chaves County may participate in the planning process.

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PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.10

Given livestock grazing is a vital industry that supports Chaves County Services, grazing shall continue to be a valid use of all lands with special designations. The restrictions placed on lands with special designations shall not reduce the levels of grazing or increase the grazing expense on the producer.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.11

Only those areas that meet the specific definition of wilderness as set forth in the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. §1131) shall be considered as having Wilderness Characteristics in the inventory process.

- Areas contiguous with lands that already have been identified as having wilderness potential or are set aside for conservation through conservation easements or other such instruments, will not be considered as candidates for special designation because such designations would create too large of an area restricted and potentially inaccessible to Chaves County to fulfill its public health and safety duties. These include:
  - Designated Wilderness;
  - BLM Wilderness Study Areas;
  - USFWS areas proposed for Wilderness Designation;
  - USFS Wilderness Study Areas or areas of Recommended Wilderness;
  - National Park Service areas recommended or proposed for designation;
  - Lands with Conservation Easements or similar restrictive devices;
  - Areas of Critical Environmental Concern;
  - Wild and Scenic Rivers;
  - National Monuments;
  - Lands with Formal Critical Habitat; and
  - Any island of the public lands without roads.
- As a part of the inventory process, a multiple use check list will be developed to document all productive uses of the areas being considered, which will include livestock grazing, mining, timber production, oil and gas, recreation, hunting, and other uses of the lands that fulfill the multiple use objective required of Congress in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). These multiple uses contribute to the economic well-being of the citizens of Chaves County. The producers that utilize these lands are essential to Chaves County by providing the revenue necessary to ensure adequate County services.
- Where an area inventoried for special land use designation exhibits significant "multiple-use" characteristics necessary for the continued well-being of Chaves County, they shall be excluded from consideration.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.12

Prior to the publication of a proposed designation of an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and in the Federal Register, the Bureau of Land

Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Department of Defense (DOD), and other state or federal agencies shall coordinate with the Board of County Commissioners on the proposal to determine if designation of the ACEC creates any conflicts with the Chaves County's plans as required by 43 U.S.C. §1712(c)(9). Specifically, the agency shall:

- Discuss with Chaves County the "relevance" and "importance" of the area the agency has determined gives rise to the special designation;
- Recognize that the oil and gas fields in Chaves County are unique geologic systems that meet the "relevance and importance" criteria for designation as an ACEC. The extraction of these resources is a national priority providing vital resources that protect the public's health and safety, and therefore, shall not be restricted;
- Determine whether the specific activities BLM or other agencies plan to restrict in the proposed area meets the criteria set forth in federal law as causing "irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards," (43 USC § 1702 (a)). Any activities proposed for restriction that do not meet this requirement shall be allowed to continue if the ACEC is designated;
- Provide to Chaves County the Agency's review under the *Information Quality Act* (44 U.S.C. §3516) all studies and data used to determine certain activities are harmful to the restricted area; and
- Coordinate the special management activities with Chaves County in an area designated as an ACEC as required under the *Federal Land Management and Policy Act* and directed through the BLM handbook at 1613.12 or the congressionally approved management document of the agency.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.13

Chaves County, through the CLCC, shall monitor federal and state agency plans, policies, and changes to land status/ ownership as they relate to Chaves County land use policies.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.14

When a new land designation, exchange, or change in management is being considered by state or federal entities within Chaves County's jurisdiction, the agencies shall coordinate with the County to determine if the change will cause any unresolved conflicts with the County's interests and discuss options to resolve those conflicts.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.15

On a continual basis, Chaves County Planning and Zoning, in conjunction with the County Assessor's office, shall update and keep current all County land use maps, including data from the federal and state agencies located in Chaves County.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.16

Federal and state agencies shall make available all relevant land use data to Chaves County to ensure harmonious planning between the entities and provide

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the County Commission with documentation of all impact analyses, including socioeconomic impacts.

PUBLIC LANDS GOAL 2

Protect private property rights and the preservation of Chaves County's "custom and culture" through the continued use and enjoyment of state and federal lands for grazing/ranching, agriculture, mineral extraction/production, and recreation.

Objectives:

- *Objective 2.a: To ensure that traditional land uses are continued in order to protect the custom and culture of Chaves County.*
- *Objective 2.b: To increase opportunities for local economic development by increasing the amount of patented and non-federal land within the County.*
- *Objective 2.c: To identify those federal and state parcels that have a conflicting use or those that lie in isolated tracts so that they will be targeted for disposal.*
- *Objective 2.d: To rely on the established New Mexico Department of Agriculture Range Improvement Task Force to help advise the Chaves County Commissioners on preventing economic disruption and harm to the livestock industry.*

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.1

Chaves County shall consider livestock grazing as an "equitable estate".

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.2

Chaves County shall adopt a definition of private property rights that is based upon the definition found in the Attorney General's Guidelines for the evaluation of Risk and Avoidance of Unanticipated Takings dated June 30, 1988. The definition shall include protection by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution of the United States that includes real and personal, tangible, and intangible property and ensures that private property includes "investment backed expectations".

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.3

Chaves County shall promote use of federal and state trust lands that respect private property rights and increase free market opportunities for all Chaves County residents.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.4

Livestock grazing on federal and state trust lands shall continue at levels consistent with proper range management, 'custom and culture', and the protection of equitable property rights.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.5

Chaves County shall develop incentives for improving grazing land and promoting good land stewardship through:

- Permittee ownership of range improvements;
- Development of Grazing Advisory Boards;
- Appropriate fee schedules;

- Subleasing of grazing permits and leases;
- Allotment management plan flexibility; and
- Increasing grazing capacity or allowing other economic benefits to accrue to permittees making investment in range betterment.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.6

Chaves County shall coordinate with federal land agencies to ensure that they do not acquire any private lands or rights within Chaves County, including those that hold conservation easements in perpetuity, without addressing the following considerations:

- That, at a minimum, parity in land value by status is maintained in each school district; and
- That private property interests are protected and enhanced.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.7

Chaves County shall require land exchanges or adjustment of land to use the following strategies:

- Permittees or other users will have preferential options to purchase federal or State Trust lands that lie within or adjacent to lands they currently lease or own when those lands are considered for adjustment or disposition;
- Request that the New Mexico State Land Office assist Chaves County in coordinating land exchanges so as to maximize patented fee simple lands; and
- In situations where the Chaves County Commissioners determine that federal land agencies are proposing to change the local historic custom, culture, and community stability of land use, the Chaves County Commissioners, at their discretion, may require adverse impact studies as outlined in Presidential Executive Order 12630, which requires that all federal agencies complete a Taking Implication Assessment to evaluate the effect of their rules, regulations, and decisions on: 1) Private property; 2) Private property rights; and 3) The investment backed expectations of private citizens. These requirements shall be conducted and mitigation measures adopted with concurrence from Chaves County. Adverse impact studies shall address all classes of grazing rights, flood prone areas, public access, and the health and well-being of the citizens of Chaves County.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.8

Chaves County shall adopt the principles of the *Public Rangelands Improvement Act,* 43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq. as County policy. The procedures set forth in the *Public Rangelands Improvement Act* and accompanying Memorandums of Understanding as modified by this *Comprehensive Plan* shall govern all actions involving the federal agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Forest Service, and either an individual or group of livestock grazing permittee(s) or lessee(s), including but not necessarily limited to the creation or revision of an allotment management plan, and other like actions or as requested by the permittee(s) or lessee(s).

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PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.9

Chaves County shall coordinate with the BLM and the US Forest Service in initiating the consultation procedures described in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Governor of New Mexico and the New Mexico State Director, BLM, US Department of the Interior, dated July 30, 1980. In addition, Chaves County shall coordinate the initiation of consultation procedures described in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Director of the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) and the Regional Forester, US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS) Southwestern Region, dated July 28th, 1987.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.10

Chaves County may develop, in coordination with federal and state governments, an effective Section 8 process pursuant to the *Public Rangeland Improvement Act of 1978* and may implement procedures and guidelines to account for the allocation expenditures of range improvements funds and funds collected through the Sikes Act.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.11

Chaves County may adopt a policy in relation to the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) 43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq. with a Memorandum of Understanding between the State of New Mexico and the BLM, the Regional Forester, US Forest Service, the purpose of which is to promote efficient multiple management of the range resources in Chaves County.

PUBLIC LANDS GOAL 3

Protect the public's safety on all land within Chaves County, including federal and state trust lands.

Objectives:

- *Objective 3.a: To ensure communication among law enforcement agencies and that the Chaves County Sheriff has access to public lands.*
- *Objective 3.b: To ensure full use and access to the public lands within Chaves County for appropriate public use and the public's safety.*

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 3.1

Chaves County shall recognize that the County Sheriff is the senior law enforcement officer in Chaves County. As such, the Chaves County Sheriff shall have primary jurisdiction over all law enforcement matters within Chaves County outside the limits of incorporated cities, towns, and villages.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 3.2

All open trails and roads should be designated as open. Full open access should be made available to the public lands for local purposes, such as safety, health, economics, and use of recreations, as assured by federal and state law. No road or trail should be closed unless public safety or health demands its closing. No RS 2477 right-of-way should be closed.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 3.3

All inventory actions of the trails and roads in Chaves County by federal and state agencies shall be coordinated with the County:

- If a federal or state agency conducting inventory of roads or trails plans to hire contractors to gather the inventory data, local organizations that have familiarity with Chaves County, such as the soil and water conservation districts, shall be contacted by the agency and offered an opportunity to bid for the contract; and
- The Board of County Commissioners and the County Sheriff's office shall be notified prior to the initiation of the inventory work, as to who has been retained, and the location and schedule for the work to be performed.

PUBLIC LANDS GOAL 4

Prevent damage to private or public lands and to domestic animals from wild animals on federal and state trust lands relative to grazing or other traditional land uses vital to the economy of Chaves County.

Objectives:

- *Objective 4.a: To provide for the identification, removal, or relocation of excessive numbers of all wild animals that damage private or public lands within the confines of the law and that have an economic impact on Chaves County or its citizens.*
- *Objective 4.b: To establish with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish the maximum and minimum hunting for big game.*

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 4.1

Chaves County shall establish a mechanism to determine and notify affected federal and state agencies concerning issues regarding wild animals, hunting, or other issues impacting private land or the 'custom and culture' of Chaves County.

PUBLIC LANDS GOAL 5

Provide proper stewardship of Chaves County's natural resources that respects the custom and culture, protects the economic vitality, and quality of life of Chaves County.

Objectives:

- *Objective 5.a: To ensure that public lands continue to be managed under the multiple use concept to provide opportunities for all users of public lands in accordance with Chaves County's custom and culture.*
- *Objective 5.b: To ensure that all Sikes Act funds collected in Chaves County are spent in Chaves County.*

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 5.1

Chaves County may encourage Congress to promote a wetlands policy to include only those areas that actually function as wetlands, which would allow for the development of wetlands areas when overriding public need requires such development and it is offset by suitable mitigation actions, and does not require

land designated as agricultural land by the USDA prior to 1985 to be restored to conditions that existed prior to agricultural use. Chaves County may, at the option of the County Commission, be the lead agency in designating wetlands. Wetlands are defined as "Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions."

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 5.2

Chaves County shall continue to coordinate with the Chaves Soil and Water Conservation District's Noxious Weed Removal initiative and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Noxious Weed Program and its noxious weed coordinator to manage on-the-ground noxious weed reduction.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 5.3

Chaves County shall participate fully as allowed by law in all processes for the purpose of identifying and classifying species of special status that may impact the County. This includes the formulation of plans for the recovery of any federal or state listed threatened or endangered species, including any proposed introduction or re-introduction of a species by artificial actions of government agencies or personnel.

- Chaves County is authorized to engage in conservation efforts for the purpose of benefiting species within the County. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must coordinate with the County pursuant to the *Endangered Species Act* (ESA) at (16 U.S.C. 1533(b)(1)(A)) and consider the County's policies and conservation efforts prior to making a determination regarding the threatened or endangered status of a species. Prior to making a determination whether a species is threatened or endangered, the federal agency is required to take into account "those efforts, if any, being made by any State or foreign nations, or any political subdivision of a State or foreign nation, to protect such species, whether by predator control, protection of habitat and food supply, or any other conservation practices, within any area under its jurisdiction; or on the high seas." This includes a review of Chaves County's plans, policies, and projects, as well as those of other local governments with conservation interests in the County.
- The ESA also requires that the US Fish and Wildlife Service cooperate with Chaves County to resolve any water resource concerns related to the conservation of species. "It is the policy of the Congress that Federal agencies shall cooperate with State and local agencies to resolve water resource issues in concert with conservation of endangered species," (16 U.S.C. 1531(c)(2)). Pursuant to this provision, Chaves County requires that before species are placed under federal protection and before critical habitat is designated and before species are introduced or reintroduced into the County by federal or state agencies, that the agencies first coordinate with the County and all local governments to resolve any water resource concerns that may develop as a result of the federal or state agency action.

- The best available science is to be utilized by all agencies when determining the status of a species or condition of resources. All scientific data shall be held to the standard of review required by the Information Quality Act (44 U.S.C. §3516). Any study, data, or other scientific document that does not meet this standard shall not be used to support a finding that leads to the federal or state protection of a species.
- Critical habitat designations must take local socio-economic impacts into account. Areas may be excluded as critical habitat based upon economic impacts unless the failure to designate the area as critical habitat would result in extinction of the species.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 5.4

Chaves County shall promote and facilitate public and private recreational opportunities compatible with local 'custom and culture'.

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 5.5

Federal and state trust land and wildlife management and enforcement agencies shall coordinate with Chaves County on matters regarding wildlife and resources. The Board of County Commissioners shall review and comment on all plans and proposals prior to finalization or initiation of actions by federal and state agencies.

PUBLIC LANDS GOAL 6

Protect the continued use of mineral resources as a vital aspect of Chaves County's custom and culture and economy.

Objectives:

- *Objective 6.a: To promote responsible mineral resource extraction and management in Chaves County.*

PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 6.1

Chaves County shall review all decisions made by federal and state agencies concerning the extractive industries that have an economic impact on the citizens of Chaves County.

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LAND USE

ENSURING FUTURE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IS SUSTAINABLE AND CONSISTENT WITH CHAVES COUNTY'S VISION AND CUSTOM AND CULTURE

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4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Land Use element provides guidance to Chaves County on making clear and informed land use decisions. This element addresses existing land uses, issues, and the effect of growth and development on land use in Chaves County. It also addresses the Extraterritorial Zone (ETZ), which is a 2-mile area of land within Chaves County that surrounds the City of Roswell.

Historical settlement patterns in Chaves County were largely influenced by agriculture. The discovery of artesian wells in the late 1800s led to population growth and the steady urbanization of Roswell. The railroad, which contracted to support the agricultural industry, was a major factor in building communities such as Kenna, just outside the County line in Roosevelt County, and Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur, just south of Roswell near the Pecos River. Roswell continued to grow within its City limits until several rural water cooperatives were established in Chaves County. These water cooperatives facilitated the growth that has occurred around Roswell. As people began to move into the unincorporated parts of Chaves County, the water systems became burdened and agricultural land became mixed with non-agricultural, residential uses.

Land ownership in Chaves County is a mix of federal, state, and privately-owned land in a largely rural county. Roswell is the major urbanized area and employment center. To the southeast lies the Pecos Valley, characterized by large expanses of agricultural land, separated by the communities of Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur. There are smaller, unincorporated communities located throughout Chaves County, but the major population areas with diverse land uses primarily occur within the incorporated communities.

The intent of the Land Use element is to protect the local custom and culture, promote economic stability, protect private property rights, and establish a framework to ensure harmonious and orderly growth for the future. This element creates a solid foundation upon which future planning by Chaves County, municipalities, state and federal agencies, and the private sector can work together to create an efficient pattern of development, promoting and protecting the quality of life in Chaves County.

The largest land uses in Chaves County are grazing, irrigated agriculture, and rural residential. Other land uses within the unincorporated areas are primarily within the Roswell-Chaves County ETZ.



Cows grazing in Chaves County.

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4.2 PRIMARY LAND USES

AGRICULTURE


Silo along the rail line.

Agriculture is a major land use in Chaves County, playing a critical role in its economic vitality. Preservation of agriculture's positive impacts to both economic development and land use are important factors for the future of Chaves County. The dairy industry, in particular, is significant in Chaves County, and has been the driving force behind the development of several feed and grain storage and distribution facilities, the Leprino Foods cheese plant (one of the largest cheese plants in the world), and several other support industries.

Ranching was one of the first industries to be established in the southwest and continues to be of great economic importance to Chaves County. Within the general category of agriculture, ranching utilizes the greatest amount of land area in Chaves County. A large amount of private land and most of the federal and state land in Chaves County is used for grazing purposes.

Within the Extraterritorial Zone (ETZ), agriculture continues to thrive with pecan orchards, industrial hemp, and cannabis. While Chaves County has yet to experience heavy encroachment by urbanized development, the County is actively pursuing economic development opportunities that would bring in more jobs and more residents. As urban development demands increase, preservation of agricultural land will become more of an issue that Chaves County will need to address through specific strategies designed to maintain the current amount of farmland. The land use strategies proposed will work in concert with those in Chapter 6: Economic Development.

While agricultural preservation is important, this must also be balanced with concerns of farmers and ranchers who want viable options for their land if they can no longer earn a living with agriculture. This includes the option of being able to sell their land to developers in the future. As part of this analysis, Chaves County should work with property owners to determine new uses for abandoned dairies and farms to encourage new economic development opportunities. The intent of this *Comprehensive Plan* is not to infringe on private property rights, but to balance the desire to keep agriculture as an integral component of Chaves County's 'custom and culture', while maintaining and preserving private property rights.

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RURAL RESIDENTIAL

The predominant residential development in Chaves County is rural residential, which may include agriculture activities. This is supported by the current residential development standard in the western part of Chaves County, which is a minimum lot size of five acres for each single-family residence. Chaves County established the five acre minimum lot size to reduce the residential density in unincorporated areas of the County and the following:

- To decrease the possibility of groundwater contamination by reducing the number of water wells and septic tanks being installed;
- To help to preserve the urban-rural interface around Roswell;
- To direct growth into Roswell where it can be adequately serviced; and
- To help preserve agricultural land in Chaves County.

Although the minimum five acre lot standard has provided a rural living opportunity and a much-desired freedom from urban codes, taxes, and regulations, there have been a number of complaints from rural dwellers, including:

- Maintaining a lot as large as five acres is expensive and time consuming;
- Chaves County does not construct and assume maintenance of access roads;
- Fire, ambulance, and law enforcement services are not as extensive as in Roswell;
- There are higher costs involved with acquisition of utility services; and
- There is no water, sewer, or trash pickup service offered by Chaves County.

COMMERCIAL

The vast majority of commercial land uses are located inside the boundaries of incorporated municipalities and those that are outside of these boundaries are generally located within the ETZ surrounding the City of Roswell. Some commercial uses have been approved in various locations throughout the unincorporated areas of Chaves County, typically along the major road corridors. This includes a construction company that built a field office off south US 285. Roadside establishments designed to sell local agricultural products, though commercial in nature, are generally permitted as a part of an agricultural use. In addition, there are many "home occupations" throughout Chaves County that are commercial uses, such as small-scale trucking operations.

INDUSTRIAL

Industrial development in Chaves County is limited and, for the most part, located in the ETZ or within a municipality. The Roswell Air Center (RAC) is located in the southernmost area of Roswell, providing approximately 5,000 acres of industrial land connected to Roswell by South Main Street. The Hagerman Industrial Park contains approximately 80 acres of industrial land and is located in the northern portion of Hagerman. These parks are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5: Economic Development.

The majority of the industrial land in unincorporated Chaves County is within the southern area of the ETZ at or adjacent to the RAC. Other industrial areas exist

just north of the Roswell city limits, and a few industrial uses have been approved throughout the unincorporated areas of Chaves County, many of which have a direct connection with adjacent agricultural uses. Renewable energy projects, such as solar and wind, and newer uses like data centers and battery energy storage systems, which remain an interest to developers in Chaves County, are considered industrial uses. These are discussed further in Section 4.4 Emerging Land Uses, page 66.

Aside from these higher intensity uses, typical uses in the industrial areas include trucking businesses that have outgrown their home occupations and storage related to oil extraction or standard steel. In areas where industrial development has been slow to emerge, some residential development has encroached on industrial areas, such as the area north of Roswell on US 70, which introduces a potential conflict between these land uses. Chaves County is looking for a new industrial area south of Roswell on Brasher Road and is working with the Town of Dexter to establish an industrial area.

SURFACE MINING / EXTRACTION & OIL & GAS PRODUCTION

There is land in Chaves County being used for extraction purposes, such as gravel mining and oil and gas production. Gravel mining operations are scattered throughout Chaves County, while the majority of oil and gas drilling occurs mainly in the eastern area of the County. Historically, although oil and gas exploration is permitted in all Chaves County residential zones as a special use, mining activities in Chaves County have not negatively impacted adjacent land uses since they have occurred in relatively remote areas. Drilling for oil and natural gas has increased steadily since the late 1970s and is vital to the economy of southeast New Mexico. This industry is subject to boom and bust cycles.

4.3 LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS & ORDINANCES

Chaves County regulates land use throughout its unincorporated area. County ordinances regulate development in all areas outside of the Roswell-Chaves County Extraterritorial Zone (ETZ), which has its own zoning ordinance adopted by the ETZ Commission. However, because the ETZ is not a separate jurisdiction, the Chaves County Planning and Zoning Department enforces all land use regulations in Chaves County, including those within the ETZ.

Each municipality in Chaves County is responsible for its own planning and zoning. All of these communities have adopted their own comprehensive plan, and Roswell, Dexter, and Hagerman have adopted zoning ordinances.

CHAVES COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NO. 12)

The Chaves County Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1981 by the County Commission and has been amended from time to time, up to the most recent amendment in 2023. The Zoning Ordinance regulates land use through “Areas”, which are geographically-based, and “Zones”, which are use-based. The base zoning throughout Chaves County allows agriculture and low-density single-family residential. Area I, on the east side of Chaves County, has no minimum lot size restrictions, while Area II, on the west side, requires a 5-acre minimum for any new

parcel established. Since 2016, the Zoning Ordinance has been amended to provide detailed regulations for Workforce Camps, RV Parks, Cannabis Establishments, and Wind Energy Conversion Systems.

CHAVES COUNTY SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NO. 51)

The current *Chaves County Subdivision Ordinance* was initially adopted in 1973 and amended in 1997. The *Subdivision Ordinance* provides procedures for filing preliminary, final, and summary subdivision plats, replats, and vacations of easements, lots, and rights-of-way. The purpose of the *Subdivision Ordinance* is to generally implement the goals and policies in the *Comprehensive Plan and* to ensure development is consistent with state enabling legislation and County regulations.

The *Chaves County Subdivision Ordinance* is intended to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare by ensuring that land is divided and developed in an orderly manner. The *Subdivision Ordinance* seeks to protect property values, prevent incompatible land uses, reduce congestion, provide adequate access and infrastructure, and establish reasonable subdivision design standards. It also supports the conservation of agricultural and natural resources, protection of environmental quality, effective drainage and water resource management, preservation of rural character, and long-term sustainability.

EXEMPTIONS

The *Chaves County Subdivision Ordinance* incorporates 13 different exemptions from the *New Mexico Subdivision Act* (NMSA 47-6-2) that subdividers can claim. Chaves County retains the authority to adopt more restrictive local standards where permitted by law. The *Subdivision Ordinance* provides a process for claiming an exemption from the requirements of both the *New Mexico Subdivision Act* and the *Chaves County Subdivision Ordinance.* It recognizes several categories of subdivision that may be exempt from the requirements of subdivision approval, and includes a "Claim of Exemption" form through which applicants may request an exemption based on one or more of the following circumstances:

- Agricultural parcels of thirty-five acres or more that have been continuously used for agricultural purposes for at least three years.
- Court-ordered land divisions that create no more than one parcel for each party involved.
- Agricultural or grazing land divisions creating parcels of at least ten acres that will continue to be used for farming or ranching.
- Boundary line adjustments that alter existing parcel boundaries without creating additional parcels.
- Transfers to immediate family members, limited to one parcel per family member from a tract of land.
- Large-acreage transfers where no resulting parcel is smaller than 140 acres.

Exemptions should be consistent with the goals and policies of this *Comprehensive Plan* and should not adversely affect orderly growth, public health and safety, agricultural viability, natural resource conservation, or the provision of adequate

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infrastructure and public services. Approval of exemptions should seek to balance private property rights with the long-term economic, environmental, and social well-being of Chaves County.

CHAVES COUNTY FLOOD DAMAGE PREVENTION ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NO. 9)

In 1983, Chaves County adopted the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance, joined the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), and began using maps issued by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that identified special flood hazard areas in the County. The Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance was amended in 2003, and the FEMA maps were subsequently updated in September 2009.

ROSWELL-CHAVES COUNTY EXTRATERRITORIAL ZONING ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NO. 80-1_REVISION 21)

The City of Roswell has a two-mile extraterritorial zone (ETZ) that it shares with Chaves County. The *Roswell-Chaves County Extraterritorial Zoning Ordinance,* adopted in 1980 by the County Commission and the Roswell City Council, applies to land uses and future development in this area. It was agreed that Chaves County would administer the *ETZ Ordinance* and be overseen by an ETZ Authority comprised of three County Commissioners and two City Councilors. The ETZ Commission, consisting of three members appointed by the County Commission, three members appointed by the City Council, and a seventh member elected by the first six appointed members, acts as a recommending body to the ETZ Authority.

In 1996, the *ETZ Ordinance* was amended to reflect a change in the state statute that gives final decision-making authority to the ETZ Commission, which meets monthly or as needed. The Ordinance has also been revised several times since 2016, most recently in 2025. The ETZ Authority continues to hear appeals and approves amendments to the Ordinance and the City of Roswell signs off on plats and boundary surveys.

Unlike the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance,* the *ETZ Ordinance* establishes standard use-based zoning districts, which include:

- R-1: Single Family Residential
- R-2: Two Family (Duplex) Residential
- R-3: Multiple Family Residential
- R-S: Rural Suburban
- O-1: Offices Professional
- C-1: Commercial
- I-1: Industrial
- PUD: Planned Unit Development
- F-1: Floodplain*
- F-2: Flight Zone*
- L-1: Arterial Overlay*
- S-1: Outdoor Advertising Overlay*

**Overlay districts*

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There is more development within the ETZ than other areas within unincorporated Chaves County. There have been a number of amendments to the *ETZ Ordinance* since 2016, which are summarized below:

- Eliminated mobile home parks in the R-2 and R-3 zones.
- Clarified that a duplex is not two manufactured homes adjoined together or on separate locations on a lot.
- Clarified that the largest septic system allowed for residential development is for a six-bedroom multi-family unit. In R-2 or R-3, either outright or by variance, a multi-family development is allowed, provided the total number of bedrooms do not exceed six (e.g., a tri-plex with three 2-bedroom units).

Most residential development within the ETZ has occurred on single lots, with very few subdivisions. Sidewalks are not required in the ETZ due to the large lot sizes and rural context. Lots within the ETZ receive City water and sewer services at a higher cost than what Roswell residents pay; however, residents within the ETZ are not charged extension fees.

Recent large-scale utility development in the ETZ, such as solar farms, have been controversial with residents. To reduce conflicts of this type within the ETZ, the ETZ Commission should consider the adoption of regulations to incorporate buffers, promote stability, and set expectations.

Article 26

Article 26, adopted in May 2025 as an amendment to the *Roswell-Chaves County ETZ Zoning Ordinance,* establishes regulations related to zoning, location, and operations for sexually-oriented businesses and adult entertainment enterprises. The regulations are intended to protect the public health, safety, and welfare by mitigating negative secondary effects associated with these uses, including impacts on neighborhoods, public safety, property values, and to preserve the quality of commercial, industrial, and recreational activities within the ETZ, while allowing expression protected by the U.S. Constitution in appropriate locations.

Such businesses are permitted only within the I-1 Industrial District and require specific use approval by the ETZ Commission. Article 26 prohibits residential dwellings and overnight recreational vehicle use on the same parcel. Sexually-oriented businesses are subject to specific location and separation requirements from residential areas, other sexually-oriented businesses, parks, schools, religious institutions, childcare facilities, and similar youth-oriented or public uses. Article 26 also sets forth uniform operational and development standards, including age restrictions, limits on hours of operation, on site security requirements, compliance with fire and building codes, lighting and soundproofing standards, visibility controls to prevent public exposure, and requirements for interior monitoring by management.

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4.4 EMERGING LAND USES

RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION & STORAGE

Chaves County is experiencing increased interest in solar and wind renewable energy, which are both rapidly expanding their footprint as property owners look for an alternative to ranching. Participants in the Community Survey agreed that renewable energy should be expanded in Chaves County but expressed concerns regarding disturbances to the rural way of life and to wildlife based on the potential impact of these land uses. While biomass was explored previously, Chaves County has not seen interest in this technology in recent years.

Xcel Energy

In May 2026, Xcel Energy received regulatory approval for a major 3,850-megawatt energy generation expansion across New Mexico and Texas. While the project is primarily focused on the Permian Basin, Chaves County will play a supporting but strategically important role in the broader regional system. The main high-voltage transmission corridor is located farther east, linking the Texas Panhandle through Roosevelt County to Lea County; however, the overall buildout will enhance electrical connectivity and capacity throughout southeastern New Mexico, including Chaves County.

Within the Chaves County, improvements will primarily include upgrades to existing transmission lines, increased substation capacity, and stronger integration with neighboring energy systems as part of Xcel Energy's "Power for the Plains" initiative. Although the impacts are largely indirect, Chaves County will benefit from access to a more robust regional grid that can support future residential, commercial, and industrial growth. Overall, the expansion will improve system reliability, reduce the risk of outages, and position Chaves County to capitalize on regional economic development.

Wind Energy

Chaves County defines Wind Energy Conversion Systems (WECS) in the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* as *"an electricity generating facility consisting of one or more Commercial Wind Turbines under common ownership, operation, or control, and includes related on-site structures such as substations, MET (meteorological) Towers, cables/wires and other buildings accessory to such facility, whose main purpose is to supply electricity to off-site customer(s), but does not include the High-Voltage Transmission Line(s) used for the transmission and distribution of the generated electricity or Private Wind Turbines."*

WECS have been expanding in Chaves County for several years. This is in part due to clean energy portfolio targets with utility providers, but also because WECS can be co-located with other uses, such as agriculture and ranching, making Chaves County a prime location. Chaves County allows WECS with an approved Special Use Permit. The 2023 amendments to the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* provides development standards for light beacons and the allowable proximity to residential uses.

Solar Energy

Chaves County defines Solar Energy Conversion System/Solar Panels as "a device that collects energy from the sun and converts it to produce electricity or other forms of energy." Like WECS, these are a rapidly growing land use due to clean energy transitions. Unlike WECS, solar is considered a primary use in Chaves County and cannot be collocated with another use like ranching.



Utility-scale solar project. Source: Xcel Energy.

Battery Energy Storage Systems

Battery energy storage systems store electrical energy with batteries, supporting the power grid and helping to maintain a steady energy supply and demand. Several battery energy storage systems development companies are currently exploring locations in Chaves County.

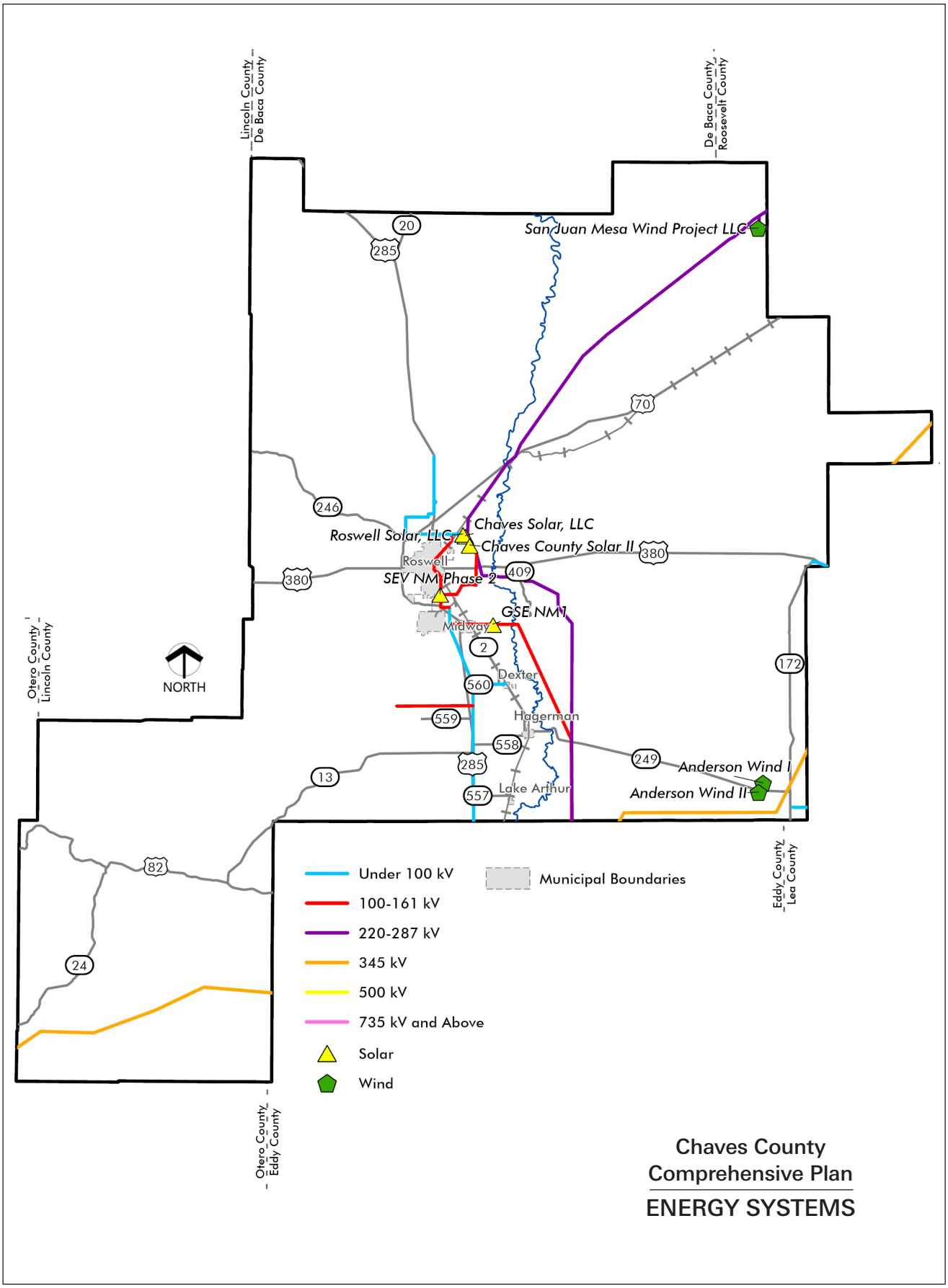
Establishing appropriate locations for battery energy storage system projects is critical, particularly as Chaves County reevaluates its storm drainage patterns in response to the major flood event in 2024. This high energy use is not appropriate for development in any designated FEMA floodplain or in unstudied floodplains.

Recycling of Renewable Energy Components

Like all machinery, the component parts of renewable energy production wear out and need to be replaced, which means that the replaced parts need a safe disposal method. For components like wind blades, which are very large, there are not yet tested and regulated methods for disposing of these components. In one particular case, a property owner in Chaves County established a "recycling" operation for wind blades, which involved multiple steps of shredding and grinding the wind blades, each step of which releases microscopic particles containing fiberglass, glue, and other by-products into the atmosphere, which was not an approved use.

This type of recycling is not yet defined by the New Mexico Environment Department, which makes it difficult to regulate at the local level. Compounding this is the fact that the New Mexico Air Quality Control Act, NMSA 74-2, limits the ability of governments to administer the Air Quality Control Act locally to any county that was a Class A County in 1980, which does not include Chaves County.

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Lincoln County
De Baca County
De Baca County
Roosevelt County
San Juan Mesa Wind Project LLC
20
285
70
246
Chaves Solar, LLC
Roswell Solar, LLC
Chaves County Solar II
380
Roswell
409
380
SEV NM Phase 2
GSE NM1
Midway
2
172
Otero County
Lincoln County
NORTH
Dexter
560
559
Hagerman
558
249
Anderson Wind I
285
13
Lake Arthur
Anderson Wind II
557
82
Eddy County
Lea County
Under 100 kV
Municipal Boundaries
100-161 kV
220-287 kV
345 kV
24
500 kV
735 kV and Above
Solar
Wind
Otero County
Eddy County
Chaves County
Comprehensive Plan
ENERGY SYSTEMS

DATA CENTERS

A data center is a dedicated room, structure, or large, standalone facility that houses computer servers and other associated equipment. As data center development accelerates, concerns regarding energy, water consumption, and land use impacts can raise concerns. Chaves County can respond to the impacts of data centers by implementing proactive approaches such as:

- Require Conditional Use approvals for data centers requiring discretionary review of proposed plans ensuring compatibility with surrounding uses and evaluation of potential impacts on the community.
- Establish development standards for noise, setbacks, water use, energy demand, and emissions. Support and encourage renewable energy infrastructure to power data centers.
- Implement Community Benefit Agreements, which can ensure commitments to reinvestment locally, infrastructure improvements, and environmental protections. These can be codified as part of a Conditional Use Permit approval.
- Clearly identify data centers as a distinct use within the Chaves County Zoning Ordinance, rather than a lump it into a broad "utility" or "industrial" use category.

By providing clear guidance on data center development, Chaves County can ensure these projects support the community and align with quality-of-life goals.

4.5 LAND USE ISSUES

DILAPIDATED BUILDINGS

Participants in the Community Survey noted that the areas of Chaves County that most need visual improvement are residential and commercial buildings or properties. As the population continues to age, a growing number of Chaves County residents are unable to maintain their properties, resulting in an increase in dilapidated buildings. These structures not only create visual blight but can also pose safety hazards and negatively impact surrounding property values. Addressing this issue will require a combination of proactive code enforcement, assistance programs for elderly homeowners, and strategies to encourage property rehabilitation.

SUBDIVISION EXEMPTIONS

The use of subdivision exemption procedures for small residential developments is a concern for Chaves County. Current regulations allow for numerous exemptions under New Mexico State Statute (NMSA 47-6-2), with family exemptions being the most commonly utilized. While these exemptions were intended to facilitate land transfers among immediate family members, they are often misused. For example, a landowner with a 40-acre tract may divide the property into eight parcels, one for each sibling and one for themselves, but in practice, these parcels are frequently sold or transferred to individuals outside the immediate family. This undermines the intent of the exemption and can lead to unregulated development.

Additional challenges include the failure to complete necessary deed transfers and ambiguity regarding minimum acreage requirements for agricultural use. Clear language should be added to the *Chaves County Subdivision Ordinance* that tighten

exemption regulations, define "immediate family" explicitly, and require proof of relationship prior to approval. A mandatory verification process should be established to ensure that deeds are recorded within a specified time frame. If transfers are not completed, the plat should be declared null and void.

Chaves County may apply a more restrictive review and approval process for the purpose of curtailing "stacked" subdivisions that circumvent the intent of the regulations. To address this concern, Chaves County should update the *Subdivision Ordinance* by providing a review and action process for all exemption claims; require documentation demonstrating eligibility, including proof of "immediate family" relationships where family-transfer exemptions are claimed; create additional platting regulations for exempt land divisions; establish a verification process to ensure approved conveyances are completed and deeds recorded within a specified time frame; and include a provision that exemption approvals or associated plats may become null and void if the approved transfer is not finalized in accordance with adopted regulations. In reviewing exemption requests, Chaves County should reference the New Mexico Attorney General's two-part test to determine whether a proposed land division constitutes a legitimate exemption or an unlawful subterfuge intended to circumvent the law.

Sandoval County provides a useful model by prohibiting transfers to minors, requiring timely verification of family ownership, and implementing automatic nullification for non-compliance. Similar provisions, along with notification requirements, should be incorporated into the *Chaves County Subdivision Ordinance.* These steps will help preserve the integrity of subdivision exemptions, prevent misuse, and maintain orderly development patterns.

LAND USE CONFLICTS

The most recent significant land uses in Chaves County are renewable energy installations and data centers. Solar and wind installations and battery energy storage systems have been developed in the ETZ and in the unincorporated areas of Chaves County. There has been opposition to the development of renewable energy projects where they are situated in proximity to residential development and in regard to the use of resources. Utilizing the processes outlined for data centers above, Chaves County should provide clear guidance on renewable energy development and allow for public review of plans and identification of potential impacts.

4.6 ETZ COOPERATION

There are a number of critical issues in the ETZ that Chaves County, the City of Roswell, and private land developers face if perimeter development is not properly managed. If Roswell eventually grows outward and encompasses such development, a number of elements may make the integration of existing public facilities difficult and expensive. Issues that Chaves County and the City of Roswell should cooperate on include:

- Subdivisions: Existing subdivisions may not have adequate rights-of-way as City-owned and maintained streets are extended. The subdivision may not be able to be conveniently re-subdivided to make the provision and assessment of public facilities affordable.

- Roadway Planning: A roadway master plan should be prepared for the ETZ to ensure appropriate right-of-way widths, utility corridors, and connections to the existing road network in Roswell.
- Wells: A policy addressing the creation of new private wells should be developed by Chaves County, along with policies on the extension of municipal water services in coordination with the City of Roswell. An area of specific concern for Chaves County is regarding new wells in the South Main Street area. Chaves County supports planned water line extensions to this area as a better alternative to drilling new wells and would allow properties currently served by Berrendo Water Cooperative to be added to the City of Roswell's water system. This would in turn allow Berrendo to free up the availability of its water supply for areas that cannot be served by the City of Roswell.
- Wastewater: A policy addressing the addition of new septic systems within the ETZ should be developed in coordination with the New Mexico Environment Department to address the growing concern of groundwater contamination within the ETZ.
- Capital Improvements Planning: A capital improvements plan should be developed for the ETZ to eliminate or minimize haphazard and piecemeal infrastructure extensions and the duplication of services.
- Annexations: Update the City of Roswell's annexation policies to permit the annexation of lands zoned for non-residential development.

4.7 LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

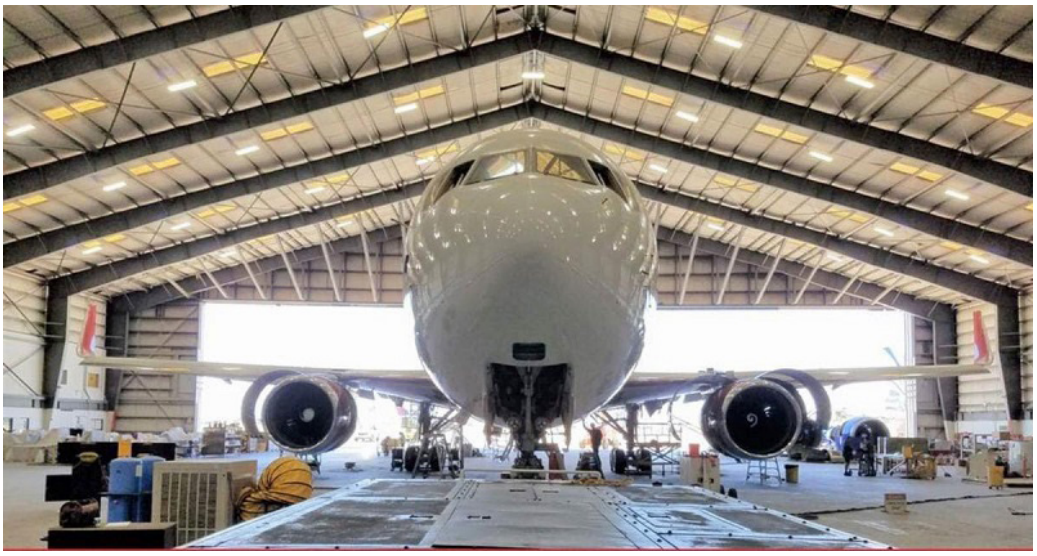
There are currently no development standards in the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* that guide commercial or industrial development, which can be a challenge to mitigation efforts as the zones do not allow enough differentiation and mitigation of potential impacts to adjacent land uses. The *Roswell-Chaves County ETZ Zoning Ordinance* includes an Arterial Overlay Zone that provides limited design standards. Chaves County should consider adding a similar Arterial Overlay Zone into the *County Zoning Ordinance* and expanding the standards for both Chaves County and the ETZ to include:

- Screening from view certain types of land uses like outdoor storage, trash bins, and mechanical equipment (screening can take the form of walls, fences, landscaping, and/or trees);
- RV Park standards;
- Lighting standards;
- Wall/fence standards;
- Traffic circulation standards; and
- Specific standards related to solar and wind projects.

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL LOCATION SITING

For commercial and industrial uses to be economically viable, they should be located along major arterials that are easy to access and highly visible. These types of developments require appropriate infrastructure to support large trucks as well as high traffic volumes. One area that fits these criteria is the current Roswell Relief Route where there is existing industrial development along its southern portion.

In addition to promoting commercial growth along high-volume corridors, allowing more commercial development along the boundary of Roswell and unincorporated areas would help provide a better transition between land uses at the urban-rural interface. The RAC provides another option for industrial development.



Aerospace/aviation at the Roswell Air Center.

ETZ RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

If a majority of new residential development in the ETZ occurs at very low densities over the next 25 years, an enormous amount of land will be consumed, much of which is currently irrigated farm land. Allowing smaller lot residential development within the ETZ would help facilitate the preservation of agriculture in more rural areas of Chaves County.

New lots created in the ETZ and in the western part of Chaves County are currently limited to a 5-acre minimum lot size for each single-family residence, except where a developer designs a subdivision with community water supply and liquid waste disposal. Specific areas within the ETZ should be made available for smaller lot development where they could function as transition zones between the urban sized lots within Roswell and five-acre and greater lots within the greater Chaves County area based on the extension and availability of municipal wastewater service.

For new residential lots and existing smaller lots that are not connected to a municipal or community wastewater system, an appropriate alternative may be a split flow system or a small package treatment system. These technologies address the concern regarding groundwater contamination from traditional septic systems.

NON-CONFORMING ACCESSORY USES

The ETZ Authority will occasionally approve a Special Use Permit for a second residence as an accessory use for use by a family member for specific medical reasons. These second residences become non-conforming when a property owner gets approval to add an accessory dwelling unit to their lot to take care of an elderly or sick family member, that family member dies or moves from the property, and the accessory residence remains and is then rented out or used for another purpose. This accessory use is now in violation of the *Zoning Ordinance* since two dwelling units are not permitted on a single lot to be rented or leased to non-family members

Non-conforming accessory uses create a problem for the Chaves County Planning and Zoning Department and Code Enforcement since there is no set system to follow-up with and track these cases. Code Enforcement has one officer for the entire County, making it difficult to track these cases.

HOME OCCUPATIONS

There are existing home occupations in Chaves County that may be in conflict with the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* if they grow beyond the definition of a home occupation. Chaves County typically allows home occupations, which are defined as activities that are secondary to the primary residential use of the property. The *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* should be analyzed to ensure that the definition for home occupation and the types of home occupations are meeting the needs of Chaves County residents.

4.8 FUTURE LAND USE

One of the most important aspects of comprehensive planning is the determination of how the community should grow and develop in the future. While the goals, objectives, and actions in each element of the *Comprehensive Plan* describes this in words, the *Future Land Use Map* provides a graphic representation of how Chaves County intends to direct growth and development over the next 20 years. The intent is to support growth primarily within the ETZ, the two-mile buffer where land use planning and zoning is coordinated by Chaves County and the City of Roswell, other areas where development already exists and could be expanded, and along major transportation corridors. The *Future Land Use Map* reflects a predominantly rural county with large areas of public land and is based on existing land ownership, land use and development patterns and trends, and input from Chaves County staff.

The *Future Land Use Map* illustrates Chaves County in its entirety and includes an enlarged area that illustrates the ETZ. Land uses included in the *Future Land Use Map* are described below:

RESIDENTIAL

The *Future Land Use Map* shows two types of residential land use categories; Rural Residential and Medium Density Residential.

Rural Residential: Rural residential is the dominant residential land use in Chaves County, reflecting the County's rural character, low-density development, and some agriculture use.

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Medium Density Residential: Medium Density Residential is designated within the ETZ where the extension of municipal services by the City of Roswell is anticipated. This land use is intended to allow for a smaller minimum lot size and represents the highest residential density within Chaves County. Development within these areas will be subject to the land use regulations contained in the *Roswell-Chaves County ETZ Ordinance.*

COMMERCIAL

The *Future Land Use Map* shows three types of commercial land use categories; Highway Commercial, Community Commercial Node, and Neighborhood Commercial Node.

Highway Commercial: Highway Commercial land use is designated along the major transportation corridors, including US 380, US 285, and NM 2, as well as Brasher Road and South Main Street, where regional access is anticipated and supported. These are uses that rely on automobile and truck traffic, such as motels, restaurants, gas stations, and service and repair shops, that primarily cater to travelers and others from throughout the southeast region of New Mexico. The graphic depiction of Highway Commercial illustrates where commercial development would be appropriate but is not intended to suggest a continuous band of commercial development along these corridors. It should be noted that the depth of the Highway Commercial land use is also exaggerated for graphic scaling purposes.

Community Commercial Node: Community Commercial Nodes are located at the major intersections of US 285 and the Clovis Highway and at US 380/70 and the Roswell Bypass. These areas are appropriate for larger-scale and higher intensity commercial development, such as shopping centers, large retail stores, commercial service centers, etc. that serve the larger community.

Neighborhood Commercial Node: Neighborhood Commercial Nodes are intended for smaller-scale businesses that serve the daily commercial retail and service needs of nearby residential areas. These areas are appropriate for restaurants, small grocery stores, coffee shops, medical clinics, feed stores, and other small-scale commercial uses that are not significant generators of traffic.

INDUSTRIAL

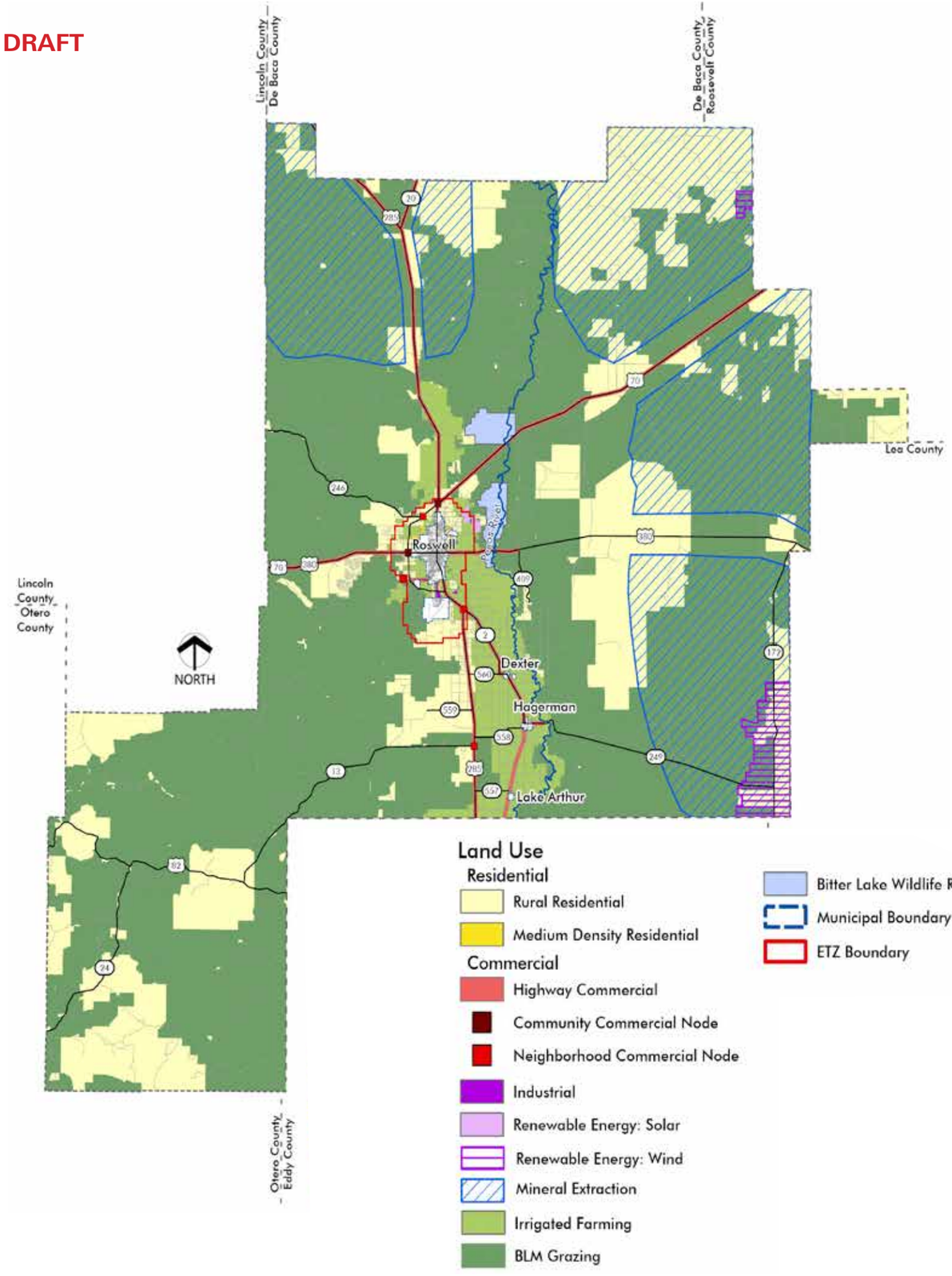
Industrial use is intended to accommodate manufacturing, assembly, fabrication, processing, warehousing, and storage activities in areas with adequate transportation access and are separated from residential development. The industrial areas shown on the *Future Land Use Map* are primarily within the ETZ near US 285 and the Clovis Highway and north and east of the Roswell Air Center (RAC).

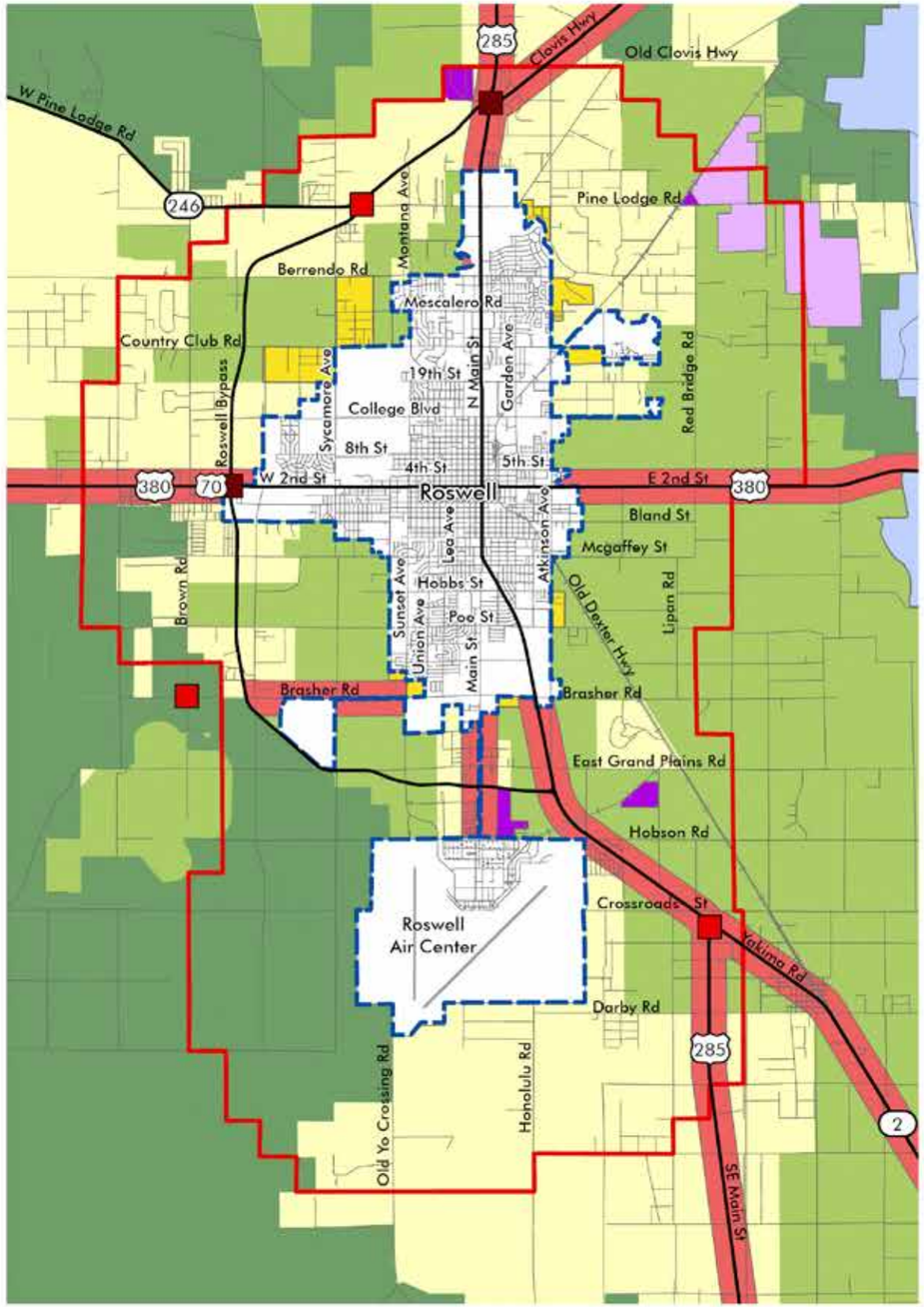
RENEWABLE ENERGY

The *Future Land Use Map* shows two types of renewable energy land use categories; Solar and Wind.

Renewable Energy - Solar: Solar Energy land use reflects existing solar development within Chaves County, both in and outside of the ETZ along the rail line and north and south of Pine Lodge Road. Future expansion of this use should occur in proximity to the existing solar energy developments to minimize or avoid any conflicts with agriculture, grazing, or conservation areas.

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ETZ INSET

Chaves County
Comprehensive Plan

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Renewable Energy - Wind: Like Solar Energy land use, Wind Energy land use is relatively limited and located along NM 249 and NM 172 and in the northeast corner of Chaves County. Both of these areas are shown overlapping large designated areas of Mineral Extraction land use. The intent is to show these areas are capable of accommodating a range of these types of land uses. Future expansion of wind energy should remain in these more remote areas to minimize conflicts with other land uses.

MINERAL EXTRACTION

Mineral Extraction land use primarily covers oil and gas extractive activities and gravel mining. These uses are designated in very large areas in southeastern Chaves County north and south of NM 249 and east and west of NM 172, between US 70 and 380, between US 285 and US 70, and west of US 285 above NM 246. This use overlaps large designated areas for grazing and some rural residential development.

IRRIGATED FARMING

Irrigated Farming land use runs north and south through central Chaves County generally following the Pecos River, and in and mostly outside of the ETZ. This use is a cornerstone of the County's custom and culture and represents the continued importance of large-scale agriculture in one of New Mexico's strongest agriculture producing counties.

BLM GRAZING

BLM Grazing is the predominant land use and covers a significant portion of Chaves County. As a cornerstone of the County's custom and culture, grazing land use is intended to be preserved and continued long-term into the future.

4.9 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

LAND USE GOAL 1

Protect, preserve, and promote agriculture - ranching, farming, and the dairy industry.

Objectives:

- *Objective 1.a: To ensure that Chaves County land use regulations do not inhibit or discourage agricultural activities.*
- *Objective 1.b: To ensure that all federal and state plans for public lands do not pose a threat to agricultural activities in Chaves County.*

LAND USE ACTION 1.1

Chaves County shall form an agricultural committee comprised of agricultural producers to prevent agricultural lands from being negatively impacted by County land use regulations and should include an existing agriculture industry representative that sits on the Chaves County Land Council (CCLC).

LAND USE ACTION 1.2

Chaves County shall adopt a Right-to-Farm ordinance as an official statement that agriculture is a valuable part of Chaves County's economy, and 'custom and

culture'. The primary focus of the ordinance shall be to strengthen the farmer's legal position when sued for private nuisance. Characteristics that should be considered include:

- Notices placed on deeds/disclosure statements on properties in agricultural areas;
- Public education on the importance of farming to the local economy and the County's 'custom and culture'; and
- Protection from lawsuits filed by neighbors who move into an agricultural area after the ranch, farm, or dairy has been established and in operation.

LAND USE ACTION 1.3

Chaves County shall explore the feasibility of using incentives for preserving agricultural lands, but do not include conservation easements held in perpetuity for consideration as an incentive.

LAND USE GOAL 2

Maintain and support the mining and oil and gas industries in Chaves County.

Objectives:

- *Objective 2.a: To enhance the role of natural resource extraction as an integral part of Chaves County's economy.*
- *Objective 2.b: To ensure compatibility between residential and extraction uses within Chaves County.*
- *Objective 2.c: To mitigate negative impacts from the mining and oil and gas industries on residential development.*

LAND USE ACTION 2.1

Chaves County shall develop siting and buffer criteria for proposed extraction uses in proximity (i.e., 1,000 feet) to residential development and incorporate the criteria into the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* for special use permits to be reviewed and approved by Chaves County.

LAND USE GOAL 3

Direct commercial and industrial development to appropriate locations in Chaves County.

Objectives:

- *Objective 3.a: To provide reasonable siting and development regulations for new commercial and industrial uses that enhance Chaves County and the ETZ, while encouraging appropriate development.*
- *Objective 3.b: To encourage commercial and industrial development along major highways and arterials with certain design standards in place relating to setbacks and parking.*
- *Objective 3.c: To encourage commercial and industrial development to locate in existing industrial parks or suitable commercial areas within the existing incorporated communities.*

- *Objective 3.d: To ensure that new commercial and industrial uses are located in areas that have reasonable access and are not injurious to residential development.*
- *Objective 3.e: To encourage appropriate home occupations within Chaves County.*

LAND USE ACTION 3.1

Chaves County shall revise the *Roswell-Chaves County Extraterritorial Zoning Ordinance* and the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* to provide for:

- A gradation of commercial uses ranging from rural/neighborhood commercial, community commercial, to regional commercial;
- A gradation of industrial uses ranging from light industrial to heavy manufacturing;
- The regulation of renewable energy, battery energy storage systems, and data centers; and
- Examination and revision to the definition of home occupation to ensure that it meets the needs of Chaves County residents.

LAND USE ACTION 3.2

Chaves County shall utilize the *Future Land Use Map* to assist in guiding the location of future commercial and industrial development. The Planning and Zoning Department shall study existing and future development to determine if the *Future Land Use Map* has created desirable land use and development patterns for Chaves County. The criteria for commercial and industrial development shall include, but not be limited to:

- Determination of whether there are negative impacts to agriculture, extraction, hunting, or recreational activities;
- Ingress and egress considerations;
- Limiting industrial development to the east side, existing access points along the Roswell Bypass, and the South Main area;
- Access to the major transportation network, particularly for industrial development, including arterials and rail;
- Consideration of the impact to existing residential neighborhoods; and
- A provision to review locations and assumptions if and when the City of Roswell extends infrastructure to the ETZ.

LAND USE ACTION 3.3

Chaves County shall use the *Future Land Use Map* as a guide to identify areas suitable for industrial, solar, battery energy storage systems, and nuclear facilities, and data centers.

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LAND USE GOAL 4

Ensure that future development in the ETZ and Chaves County protects property values by making new development attractive and compatible with existing uses.

- *Objective 4.a: To ensure that new commercial and industrial development is attractive.*
- *Objective 4.b: To ensure that new telecommunication facilities are sited to mitigate negative impacts to surrounding residential neighborhoods.*
- *Objective 4.c: To ensure that new solar, wind, nuclear, and battery energy storage systems, data centers (outside the ETZ only), and biomass energy facilities are located and designed to mitigate negative impacts to surrounding residential neighborhoods.*
- *Objective 4.d: To ensure that churches and schools are regulated as non-residential land uses.*

LAND USE ACTION 4.1

Chaves County shall amend the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* to include development and location standards for the siting of communication towers and solar, wind, battery energy storage systems, and biomass energy facilities, and data centers (outside the ETZ only).

LAND USE ACTION 4.2

As an amendment to the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance,* Chaves County shall establish an Arterial Overlay District (similar to Article 18 of the ETZ Ordinance) that contains development performance standards for new commercial and industrial development that address setbacks, buffering, lighting, building height, walls/fences, landscape/xeriscape, and screening of dumpster areas.

LAND USE GOAL 5

Preserve Chaves County's rural character and the overall gross density of development, characterized by 5-acre minimum lot sizes and allow increased density in appropriate areas of the ETZ.

Objectives:

- *Objective 5.a: To allow an increase in residential density through the use of mixed-use master planned subdivisions and specific transition zones for smaller lots that better fit future growth in designated areas of the Extraterritorial Zone.*
- *Objective 5.b: To maintain the five-acre minimum lot size in the rural portions of Chaves County where community water and sewer systems are not available.*
- *Objective 5.c: To allow Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) with community water supply and sewer systems within the ETZ and urbanized areas of Chaves County.*
- *Objective 5.d: To allow smaller lots that use community water systems (including metered, shared wells) in specific locations of the ETZ ("transition" zones between higher density subdivisions and 5-acre minimum lots within Chaves County).*

LAND USE ACTION 5.1

Chaves County shall amend the *Roswell-Chaves County Extraterritorial Zoning Ordinance* to allow lots that are smaller than 5 acres in designated areas of the ETZ that generally meet the following conditions:

- Transition areas within the ETZ that correspond to the City of Roswell's ability to deliver municipal utility services;
- As part of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) that has a community water system; and
- In the ETZ for areas served by a community water system and where soils are suitable for septic systems.

LAND USE GOAL 6

Support multi-generational housing through the allowance of accessory dwelling units.

Objectives:

- *Objective 6.a: To expand the opportunity for family members to live on the same property while maintaining their independence.*

LAND USE ACTION 6.1

Amend the *Roswell-Chaves County Extraterritorial Zoning Ordinance* and the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* to limit the size of the accessory dwelling units allowed; require a Special Use Permit; establish a process to follow up with Chaves County Code Enforcement; and allow for administrative review and approval of accessory dwelling unit requests.

LAND USE GOAL 7

Create a modernized subdivision ordinance that provides a review and approval process for dividing property within Chaves County.

Objectives:

- *Objective 7.a: To ensure the Chaves County Subdivision Ordinance follows the New Mexico County Subdivision 47-6 NMSA regulations.*
- *Objective 7.b: To ensure the Chaves County subdivision regulations address public health, safety, and well-being concerns and issues.*

LAND USE ACTION 7.1

Chaves County shall complete an update to the current *Chaves County Subdivision Ordinance* that includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Encourage domestic well sharing between property owners;
- Require installation of a meter on water wells;
- Establish the three procedures for division of land in Chaves County (Summary, Exemption and Preliminary/Final);
- Eliminate "entitlement of exemption" and provide a review and action process for all claims of exemptions, including an explicit definition for "immediate family" and requiring proof of the relationship prior to approval;

- Create additional regulations on all claims of exemption to provide and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of Chaves County;
- Establish a mandatory verification process to ensure that deeds are recorded within a specified timeframe, including a provision that if transfers are not completed, the plat should be declared null and void;
- Institute plat data requirements for claim of exemption and summary plats;
- Require necessary access roads, drainage, and infrastructure are provided in all division of lands;
- Ensure compliance with subdivision development regulations prior to filing of the final plat and construction of any new structures;
- Conditions of approval that shall be met prior to filing the subdivision plat with the Chaves County Clerk's Office, including but not limited to roadway construction per Transportation Action 2.3; and
- Communication with state and federal agencies when necessary.

LAND USE GOAL 8

Promote the responsible location, installation, operation, and decommissioning of utility-scale traditional and renewable energy producing facilities, battery energy storage systems, and data centers.

Objectives:

- *Objective 8.a: To protect residential, agricultural, and recreational uses while allowing for energy development.*
- *Objective 8.b: To ensure renewable energy development is part of Chaves County's economic development future.*
- *Objective 8.c: To ensure the stewardship and responsible management of energy producing facilities and their associated environmental impacts.*

LAND USE ACTION 8.1

Chaves County shall require applicants to notify and address the concerns of adjacent property owners prior to submitting their application for a proposed renewable energy project to the County.

LAND USE ACTION 8.2

Chaves County shall develop notification requirements and procedures for proposed renewable energy projects.

LAND USE ACTION 8.3

Chaves County shall create and incorporate zoning performance standards into the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* for utility-scale solar energy facilities that address setbacks, maximum height limits, panel spacing, visual screening, sensitive lands protection, stormwater management, decommissioning, and site restoration process.

LAND USE ACTION 8.4

Chaves County shall create and incorporate zoning performance standards into the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* for battery energy storage systems that address fire risk assessments, acoustic insulation, visual screening, spill containment, equipment spacing, and minimum buffers to existing residential development.

LAND USE ACTION 8.5

Chaves County shall create and incorporate zoning performance standards into the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* for data centers that consider adjacent land uses, availability of natural resources, utility system capacity, and require impact assessments on water resources and rangeland.

LAND USE GOAL 9

Provide a rational transition between urban and rural development and plan for the expansion of urban services by the City of Roswell within the ETZ.

Objectives:

- *Objective 9.a: To mitigate any land use conflicts at the rural-urban interface.*
- *Objective 9.b: To encourage the planned extension of urban services and roadways within the ETZ to serve new development.*

LAND USE ACTION 9.1

Chaves County shall work cooperatively with the City of Roswell on planning for the ETZ. This planning should include subdivisions, zoning, roadway extensions, water and wastewater services, and capital improvements.

LAND USE GOAL 10

Implement and provide support for the goals and objectives in the *Chaves County Comprehensive Plan* through County adopted ordinances.

Objectives:

- *Objective 10.a: Review and periodically update Chaves County ordinances to ensure general consistency with the Comprehensive Plan.*

LAND USE ACTION 10.1

Review and periodically revise Chaves County land development ordinances as necessary to reflect the goals, objectives, and policy actions as presented in the adopted *Chaves County Comprehensive Plan.*

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5 CODE ENFORCEMENT

MAINTAINING COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND PROTECTING QUALITY OF LIFE

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5.1 INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the *Comprehensive Plan* and land use ordinances is a critical link to realizing the community's vision for the future. The *Comprehensive Plan* is an expression of the community's vision and priorities for achieving that vision. Adopting new ordinances or amending existing ordinances is a typical outcome of the comprehensive planning process and are intended to ensure the ordinances implement the *Comprehensive Plan.* Ensuring those ordinances are enforced is central to the success of the overall planning process, and ultimately, creating the desired outcome for future growth and development.

Given Chaves County's large land area and limited number of staff, code enforcement is a significant challenge for the County Planning and Zoning Department. In 2025, the department employed two planners who were also code enforcement officers and three building inspectors. Fortunately, most enforcement efforts have been concentrated in the ETZ and Pecos Valley areas, but it is still difficult for the staff to effectively enforce the land use ordinances. The Planning and Zoning Department would like to deputize code enforcement officers to allow them to issue citations without requiring assistance from the County Sheriff's Office. In addition to code enforcement, the Planning and Zoning Department also reviews floodplain management, flood certifications, rural addressing, and street naming.

Participants in the Community Survey strongly indicated that the visual appearance of Chaves County should be improved. This includes streetscapes, vacant and/or abandoned residential and commercial buildings and properties, and landscaping. They also indicated their desire to see a reduction in littering and illegal dumping and want Chaves County to increase its effort on code enforcement.

The Chaves County Commission adopted the *Chaves County Nuisance Ordinance* (O-115) in March 2024, which incorporates New Mexico Statutes 3-18-5 and 4-37-1. The *Nuisance Ordinance* provides authority to the County Manager to work with property owners on reaching a financial settlement for the County's property abatement efforts. It defines a public nuisance as a condition that could affect the health, safety, welfare, and comfort of residents. This includes vacant and abandoned buildings, dangerous structures, dilapidated mobile homes, ruins, rubbish, wreckage, trash, etc.

5.2 ILLEGAL DUMPING

Illegal dumping is the unauthorized disposal of waste in any location not approved or permitted for waste disposal, typically on abandoned or vacant properties or fields, along rural roads, railway rights-of-way, and in riverbeds and arroyos. These areas are vulnerable to illegal dumping due to their remote location, poor lighting, and accessibility.

Addressing illegal dumping is a major code enforcement issue for Chaves County because it impacts the overall health, safety, and welfare of the community and the quality of life for residents. Illegal dumping also negatively impacts property values

in the general area where it occurs. Illegal dumping is a significant problem for the following reasons:

- Health concerns: There are serious health risks associated with illegal dumping that cause problems, especially for children who like to play and rummage through dump sites. Dump sites attract rodents, birds, and insects that carry diseases and viruses, such as encephalitis and the West Nile virus.
- Noxious chemicals: Noxious chemicals include toxic, corrosive, flammable, reactive, or otherwise harmful substances that can cause injury, illness, or environmental damage. Illegally dumped waste can contain noxious chemicals that can harm people or spontaneously combust and cause fires, which can easily burn out of control in the dry climate. These same chemicals can seep into the groundwater and contaminate the community drinking water.
- Visible and Unsightly: Illegal dumping also decreases property values by creating a visible and unsightly nuisance. Dump sites also tend to grow in size as other people follow the lead of the original dumper.

5.3 NUISANCE PROPERTIES

Vacant, abandoned, and/or dilapidated structures and accumulation of trash on residential and commercial properties pose similar dangers to the public health, environment, and property values as illegal dumping. The primary reasons why these properties create problems for Chaves County include:

- Attractive nuisance: Vacant, abandoned, and/or dilapidated residential and commercial structures and properties tend to attract curious children who are particularly vulnerable to health and safety risks these properties carry. These properties also tend to attract squatters and criminal activity.
- Catastrophic damage: Catastrophic damage to a structure is one of the contributing factors to abandonment by the property owner. The property owner may not have carried homeowner insurance, leaving the damaged structure in limbo.
- Absentee or deceased property owners: Many properties in Chaves County are owned by persons living outside of the area and many are tax delinquent. Other properties may be stuck in probate or the heirs are unknown. As a result, these properties accumulate trash, junk, and weeds, and if there are structures on the property, they often fall into disrepair. It is very difficult to work with absentee property owners to affect trash, junk, and weed removal and repair or removal of structures. Many communities place liens on nuisance properties and eventually move towards demolition.
- Property owner indifference: Some property owners in Chaves County do not feel that dilapidated structures on their properties are an issue and do not provide the upkeep to their property on a regular basis.
- Property owner limitations: Some property owners are elderly or in poor health and cannot physically maintain their property, while others do not have the financial resources to maintain their structure and property on a regular basis.

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5.4 GENERAL ENFORCEMENT ISSUES

The Planning and Zoning Department faces the challenge of having to enforce land use regulations within one of the largest counties in New Mexico with limited staff. This makes it very difficult to track and keep up with many of the code enforcement violations. There are numerous methods Chaves County can employ to improve its tracking and follow-up abilities, making it easier to deal with the many code violations.

- Software: The Code Enforcement division recently added iWorq software in 2025, which helps the Planning and Zoning Department with reporting and tracking permits and citations. Additional software to track vacant, abandoned, and substandard properties can be utilized that allow staff to track violations by location and status. These programs work because they have built in reminders that flag specific cases and bring them to the computer operator's attention when a case is reaching its due date or when the permit will be expiring. This allows Code Enforcement staff to work these cases into their daily routines as they come up on the computer program.
- Neighborhood Watch programs: In order to address illegal dumping, weeds and non-conforming uses, many counties sponsor Neighborhood Watch programs where neighbors report violations that occur. Chaves County could sponsor similar programs by providing support in terms of reporting mechanisms and databases to neighborhood watch groups.
- Community service organizations: Several community service organizations exist that can be effective partners in cleaning up Chaves County. NMMI uses its cadets for community service. New Mexico Youth ChalleNge is another organization that is looking for things for their kids to do to help the community. Prison inmates from the Chaves County Detention Center could help with cleanup efforts if funding is available to guard and manage the inmates properly. By partnering with such groups, Chaves County could implement cost effective methods to address littering, dumping, and general cleanup without making a large commitment of additional resources.
- Civil remedies: The County Commission and Planning and Zoning Department should work with the court system on taking these violations more seriously and to ensure these are prosecuted as civil rather than criminal penalties. Chaves County should consider imposing civil penalties on the property owner or responsible party for the cost to the County as a result of increased fire, law enforcement, and inspections at the property, and require the assessment to be paid upon the filing of a foreclosure deed
- Education: Education is a good way to keep the public informed of the problems these nuisances present to the community. This includes the public service announcements on television and social media, and teaching school-aged children about the negative impact that nuisance properties have on the community.

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5.5 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

CODE ENFORCEMENT GOAL 1

Reduce the large amount of illegal dumping that is occurring in Chaves County.

Objectives:

- *Objective 1.a: To maintain and increase property values of residential and commercial properties.*
- *Objective 1.b: To ensure the groundwater supply and the public health, safety, and welfare of Chaves County residents is protected.*

CODE ENFORCEMENT ACTION 1.1

Chaves County shall establish a comprehensive clean-up and community maintenance program that:

- Utilizes public service organizations, such as NMMI cadets and other community organizations, and prison inmates (accompanied by guards) through court mandated community service, for clean-up efforts;
- Establishes more dumpster and convenience center sites in accordance with the State Environment Department regulations;
- Sponsors a free dumping day once per month at the Roswell Municipal Landfill;
- Initiates a 'Keep Chaves County Beautiful' campaign that encourages property owners to be more responsible for their trash, take more pride in their properties, and to create a better quality of life for all residents. Coordinate this program with the City of Roswell and other incorporated communities and jointly pursue grant opportunities through the New Mexico Tourism Clean and Beautiful Program;
- Establishes an 'Adopt a Roadway' program and include signage that recognizes the responsible entity;
- Installs signs that remind drivers to cover their loads; and
- Sponsors community clean-up days and public recognition for properties that have been the most improved.

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CODE ENFORCEMENT GOAL 2

Eliminate public nuisances including abandoned or dilapidated structures, inoperable vehicles, junk, and weeds.

Objectives:

- *Objective 2.a: To promote and encourage community pride and investment.*
- *Objective 2.b: To protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the community.*

CODE ENFORCEMENT ACTION 2.1

Chaves County shall hire more code enforcement officers and allocate one code enforcement officer specifically to the ETZ. A cost-sharing agreement for the ETZ position should be negotiated between Chaves County and the City of Roswell.

CODE ENFORCEMENT ACTION 2.2

Chaves County shall utilize GIS and GPS software to improve and assist in tracking of nuisance properties.

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6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORTING GROWTH, INDUSTRY, OPPORTUNITY, AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

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6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Economic Development element provides an overview of Chaves County's current economic development potential and strategies to help facilitate sustainable economic growth and development. Economic development in Chaves County has been largely influenced by a few key industries and companies. While these industries have kept Chaves County in relatively good economic condition, the development of a sound economy is characterized by diversification and a viable business climate. As a local government activity, Chaves County provides financial support towards economic development.

Most of the economic development activities within Chaves County are facilitated by the Roswell-Chaves County Economic Development Corporation and are coordinated with the Roswell Chamber of Commerce and the Roswell Hispano Chamber of Commerce. Chaves County, together with the City of Roswell, has provided support to these organizations to advance overall economic development.

Historically, economic development and employment in Chaves County have fluctuated, with periods of tremendous growth alternating with periods of economic stagnation. Since 1967, Chaves County has seen many of its primary economic resources decline or close, only to bounce back with a new employer to take their place. The first of these economic hits occurred in 1967, when the Walker Air Force Base closed, leading to a significant population decrease. Employment generated by the Walker Air Force Base was partially replaced by manufacturing jobs, but these industries were in turn impacted by significant plant closures in 1997 and 2002. Today, Chaves County's economy is diverse with economic activity in commercial retail and services, healthcare, agriculture and ranching, oil and gas, and aviation.

6.2 ECONOMIC PROFILE

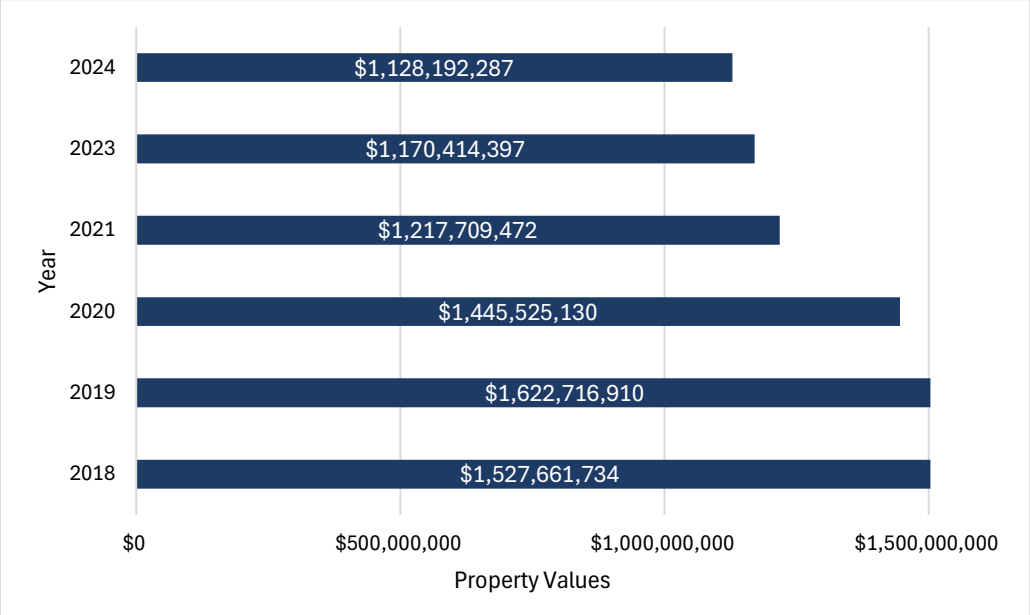
ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Economic indicators provide a method to measure the performance of the local economy and identify the economy's potential to grow. This section provides an overview of annual property values, labor force characteristics, and the industries in Chaves County.

Property Values

Property values are an important economic indicator because they reflect a community's growth and financial stability. In general, property values in Chaves County have continued to rise, both for non-residential and residential properties *(see Figure 6.1).* The increase in residential property values from 2020 to 2024 was 26.1%, while non-residential property values more than doubled, rising 57.3% during the same period. Chaves County is not an anomaly. Property values nationwide spiked during the pandemic. New Mexico's residential property values increased by 59.0% during the same time period, and non-residential property values increased by approximately 76.1%, much higher rates than in Chaves County.

FIGURE 6.1: PROPERTY VALUES, 2020-2024



Source: NM Taxation and Revenue, County Property Valuation Assessments, 2020 – 2024.

Labor Force

The Census Bureau defines the labor force as all individuals aged 16 and older who are eligible for employment, including members of the US Armed Forces. According to the American Community Survey estimates, in 2023, 56.1% of the population aged 16 and older in Chaves County was part of the labor force, reflecting a 3.3% decrease from 2013 (*see Table 6.1).* Among the civilian labor force, 94.4% were employed, while only 5.6% were unemployed. This is similar to New Mexico's civilian labor force, which reported 94.0% employed and 6.0% unemployed. Notably, the percentage of the population not in the labor force increased in both Chaves County (9.4%) and the state (13.8%), likely due to a rise in retirees who are no longer earning wages. Community Survey respondents chose retired as the primary reason they were unemployed, aligning with the above assumption.

TABLE 6.1: LABOR FORCE

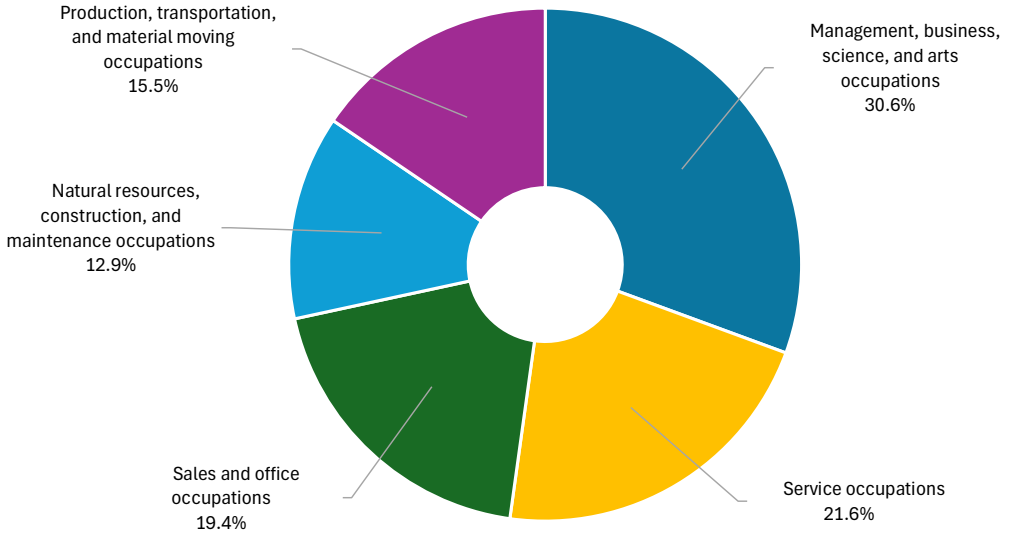
	2013	2023	% Change
Population 16 years and over	49,335	50,258	1.9%
In labor force	59.1%	56.1%	-3.3%
Civilian labor force	99.7%	99.8%	-3.2%
Employed	92.9%	94.4%	-1.7%
Unemployed	7.1%	5.6%	-23.3%
Armed Forces	0.3%	0.2%	-41.3%
Not in labor force	40.9%	43.9%	9.4%

Source: ACS, 5-year Estimates, 2013 & 2023.

Occupations

In 2023, the distribution of occupations in Chaves County was fairly balanced among the top three categories. The labor force comprised 29.9% in management, business, science, and arts occupations; 22.7% in sales and office occupations; and 22.7% in service occupations (see Figure 6.3). Chaves County had a lower percentage of workers in management, business, science, and arts occupations compared to the state average of 35.2%. The County outperformed the state in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations, with 14.6% of the workforce in this category, compared to the state's 11.6%. Additionally, 11.1% of workers in Chaves County were employed in production, transportation, and material moving occupations, higher than the state average of 9.1%.

FIGURE 6.3: OCCUPATIONS, 2023



Source: ACS, 5-year Estimates, 2023.

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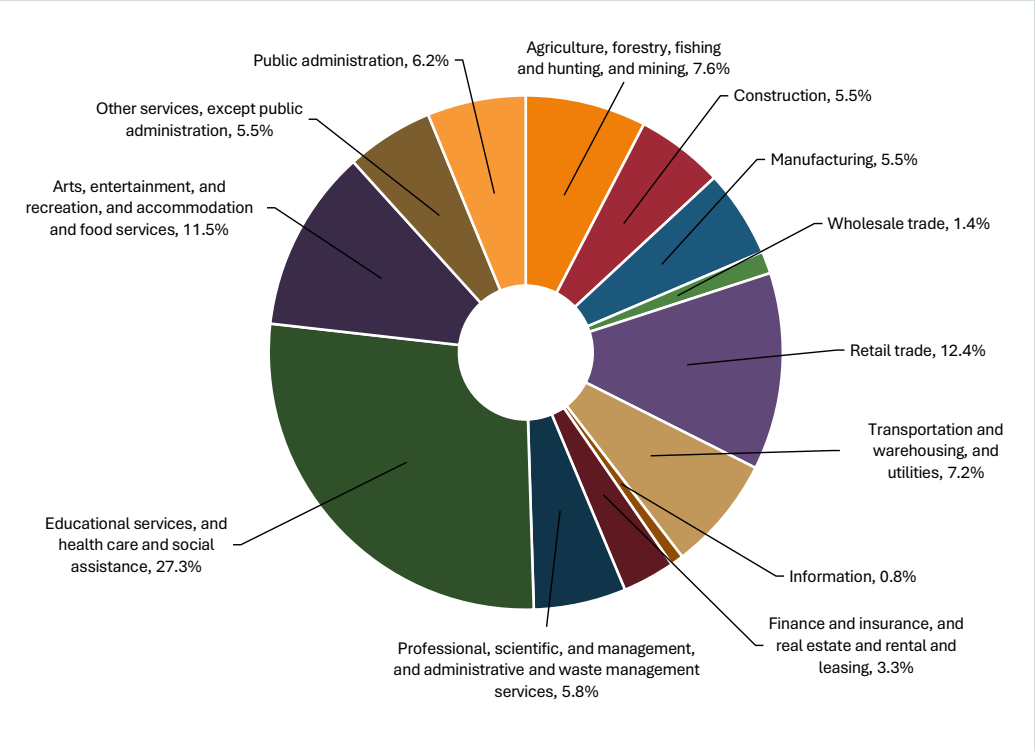
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Figure 6.4 provides a breakdown of employment by industry for Chaves County in 2023. The data shows the number of people employed and the percentage for each industry sector. Most employment opportunities in Chaves County are centered in Roswell, the primary population center, and many residents from Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur commute into the City for work daily.

Educational Services, Health Care, and Social Assistance continued to be the County's largest industry sector in 2023, employing 27.3% of the employed civilian population, the same as in 2013. The secondary industry was Retail Trade, which employs 12.0% of the workers, as it did in 2013. Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, and Accommodation and Food Services was the third largest industry sector at 11.5%, a slight increase from 10.0% in 2013.

Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining is an important economic sector in Chaves County, and there is a strong desire to preserve this industry and the lifestyle that accompanies it. Employment data from 2023 indicates that this industry accounted for just 7.6% of the labor force, down from 8.9%. However, if Roswell were excluded from the County statistics, agriculture would likely represent a larger percentage of the workforce.

FIGURE 6.4: INDUSTRIES, 2023



Source: ACS, 5-year Estimates, 2023.

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INCOME, WAGES & POVERTY

This section provides an analysis of income, wages, and poverty rates in Chaves County and compares it to surrounding counties and New Mexico as a whole. Median household income refers to all money received by a household from any source, including wages, salaries, investments, and retirement income. Wages refer to compensation based on an hourly rate and are paid for the number of hours worked.

In 2023, the annual median household income for Chaves County was $52,029, significantly lower than the statewide average of $62,125 *(see Table 6.2).* Between 2013 and 2023, the median household income in Chaves County increased by 33.0%, which was significantly less than the statewide growth rate of 38.3%. Thee growth rate in Chaves County continues to be relatively strong and shows that there are higher-paying jobs available to residents.

TABLE 6.3: WEEKLY and ANNUAL WAGES, 2023

County	Weekly	Annual
CHAVES COUNTY	$889	$46,228
Eddy County	$1,504	$78,208
De Baca County	$874	$45,448
Lea County	$1,333	$69,316
Otero County	$932	$48,464
Roosevelt County	$837	$43,524
New Mexico	$1,165	$60,580

Source: BLS, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2023.

Of the surrounding counties, Otero and Roosevelt counties reported comparable median household incomes to Chaves County in 2023, but Chaves County was the lowest of the three. Eddy County had the highest median household income at $79,605, followed by Lea County at $68,750. Eddy County also experienced the largest increase between 2013 and 2023 at 61.9%, which is attributed to the expansion in the oil and gas extractive industries in southeast New Mexico.

TABLE 6.2: MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2013 - 2023

County	2013	2023	% Change
CHAVES COUNTY	$39,131	$52,029	33.0%
Eddy County	$49,165	$79,605	61.9%
Lea County	$50,694	$68,750	35.6%
Otero County	$39,263	$52,717	34.3%
Roosevelt County	$38,764	$52,445	35.3%
New Mexico	$44,927	$62,125	38.3%

Source: ACS, 5-year Estimates, 2013 & 2023.

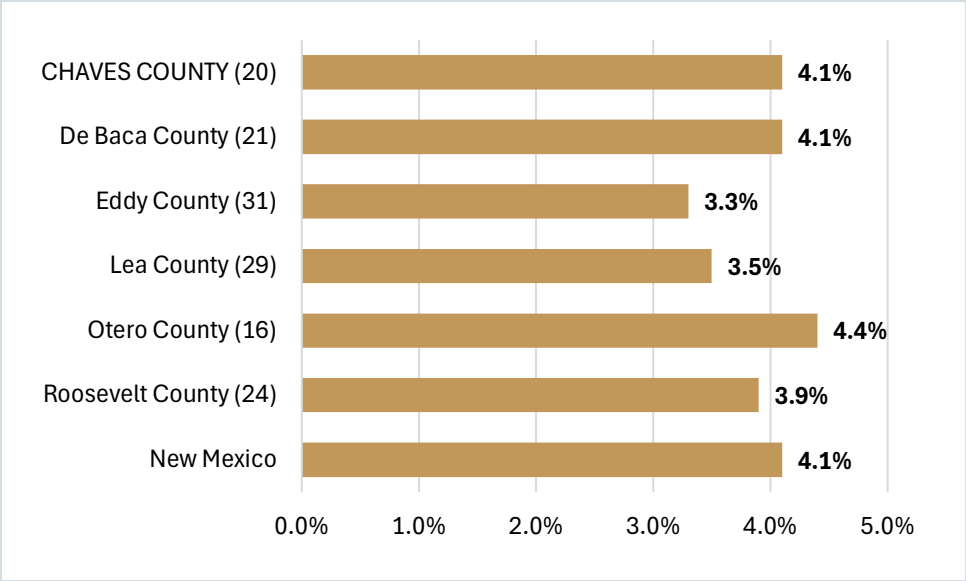
The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides data for weekly and annual wages aggregated by quarter and annually on a county level. In 2023, the average weekly and annual wages in Chaves County was $889 and $46,228, which were significantly less than the state as a whole at $1,165 and $60,580 *(see Table 6.3)*. Chaves County wages were relatively similar to several of the surrounding counties except in Eddy County and Lea County, which far surpassed Chaves County, at $78,208 and $69,316, respectively. This difference is primarily due to the strong oil and gas industry in Eddy and Lea counties.

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Unemployment

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) provides unemployment data aggregated month by month and provides a more nuanced picture of unemployment ACS estimates presented above. The unemployment rate in Chaves County in 2024 was 4.1%, exactly the same as the statewide unemployment rate. Of the 33 counties in New Mexico, this put Chaves County ranked 20th in unemployment. Three adjacent counties had some of the lowest unemployment rates in New Mexico, including Eddy County (3.3%), Lea County (3.5%), and Roosevelt County (3.9%). The unemployment rates in Southeast New Mexico and the state as a whole, are indicative of a healthy and efficient economy, where the job market is strong but allows for growth.

FIGURE 6.2: UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, 2024

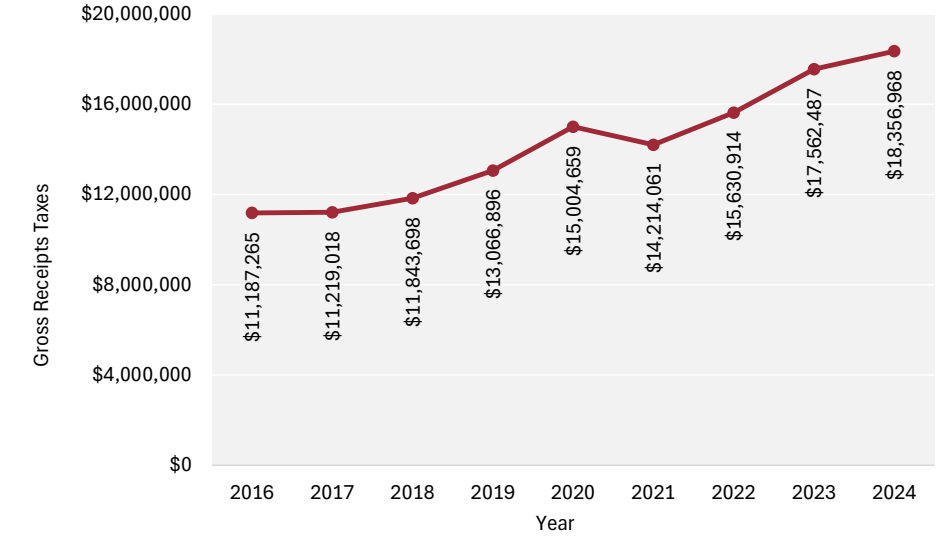


Source: ACS, 5-year Estimates, 2023.

Gross Receipts Revenues

Taxable gross receipts for all industries operating in Chaves County have experienced a positive upward trend. Figure 6.6 shows the taxable gross receipts collected at between 2014 and 2024. Though taxable gross receipts dipped in 2021, in general, they have been increasing over the past several years. The most recent data shows $18,356,968 in taxable gross receipts collected for 2024. The previous consecutive years (between 2022 and 2023) showed an upward trend for taxable gross receipts in Chaves County.

FIGURE 6.5: GROSS RECEIPT TAXES, 2016-2024



Source: Chaves County Finance Department.

6.3 INDUSTRY PROFILE

The following provides a profile of the key industries in Chaves County. The Roswell-Chaves County Economic Development Corporation (RCCEDC) provided the employment numbers and the businesses highlighted in the profile.

DAIRY & AGRICULTURE

The dairy and agriculture industries have a significant impact on the Chaves County economy. While Chaves County dairy and agriculture have seen declines in recent years, they remain an important part of the custom and culture of the County. The following provides an overview of the dairy and agricultural industries in Chaves County, based on data from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the US Census of Agriculture.

According to the NMSU Dairy Extension, the dairy industry's share of the New Mexico Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 5.9% ($6.2 B). New Mexico's mild climate, infrastructure favorable to dairy production, low land costs, and the strength of New Mexico's alfalfa production make it an ideal location for dairy production.

In 2024, Chaves County had approximately 15 dairy farms with 53,000 milk cows, a stark decline from 2013, when there were 34 dairies with 84,000 milk cows. Chaves County ranked second in the state with 19.7% of the state's milk production, behind Curry County, at 32.7%. The dairy industry brought in $242.3 million in cash receipts and produced 98.7 million pounds of milk.

According to local dairy producers, the Pecos Valley will probably not experience as much growth in the coming years, with dairies moving to other parts of the state; however, cash receipts from almost all New Mexico dairies will continue to be channeled through Chaves County since the state's dairy co-ops are based here. The primary reason for the decline in dairies in New Mexico is due to producers exiting

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TABLE 6.4: ECONOMIC IMPACT OF DAIRY INDUSTRY, 2024-2025					
County (Rank)	# of Dairy Farms	Milk Cows	Milk (lbs)	% of State Production	Cash Receipts
Curry County (1)	22	73,000	163.5M	32.7%	$402.2M
CHAVES COUNTY (2)	15	53,000	98.7M	19.7%	$242.3M
Roosevelt County (3)	23	50,000	99.1M	19.7%	$242.3M
Lea County (3)	9	32,000	72.2M	14.4%	$177.1M
Doña Ana County (4)	7	14,500	35.9M	7.2%	$88.6M
Socorro County (5)	3	7,300	13.6M	2.7%	$33.2M
Other Counties Total	4	20,200	18.2M	3.6%	$44.3M
New Mexico Total	84	240,000	501.1M	100%	$1.230M

Source: New Mexico Dairy Extension Office, New Mexico Key Indicators, March 2025.

TABLE 6.5: AGRICULTURE MARKET, 2017 & 2022			
	2017	2022	% Change
Number of Farms	560	485	-13.4%
Land in farms (acres)	2,318,143	2,309,179	-0.4%
Average size of farm (acres)	4,140	4,761	15.0%
Market Value of Products Sold	$404,515,000	$446,613,000	10.4%

Source: US Census of Agriculture, 2017 & 2022.

the industry. The current trend among dairies in New Mexico is toward large farms capable of sustaining over 1,000 head of cattle and requiring a large amount of land.

The Census of Agriculture provides a comprehensive count of US farms and ranches on a five year basis. According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, the number of farms in Chaves County decreased by 13.4% since 2017, from 560 to 485 *(see Table 6.5)*. The total amount of land used for farming decreased slightly by 0.4%. The average farm size increased by 15%, and the market value of products sold increased by 10.4%, similar to the statewide trend of larger farms replacing smaller ones. Participants in the Community Survey also pointed to the cost of supplies and labor shortages as primary external factors affecting agriculture and ranching in Chaves County.

In 2022, the crop with the largest acreage in Chaves County was forage, covering 35,879 acres, an increase of 37.1% since 2017. All major crops saw an increase in acreage, except cotton, which declined 24.8% from 2017 *(see Table 6.6).* Livestock acreage also declined significantly, with cattle and calves down by 25.2% *(see Table 6.7).* Despite this, livestock remains the dominant form of agricultural land use in Chaves County, at 144,617 heads. Participants in the Community Survey that self-identified as farmers or ranchers primarily kept livestock and/or grew alfalfa or pecans.

Agricultural products are categorized into two main groups: crops and livestock. According to the most recent data from 2022, the total market value of agriculture products sold in Chaves County was approximately $446 million. This figure placed Chaves County second amongst the 33 counties in New Mexico, behind Curry County.

In 2022, the total value of agricultural products sold in Chaves County was $446,613,000, putting Chaves County in second place out of all counties in New

TABLE 6.6: TOP CROPS IN ACREAGE			
Crop	**2017**	**2022**	**% Change**
Forage - land used for all hay and haylage, grass silage, greenchop	26,162	35,879	37.1%
Corn for silage	13,802	24,738	79.2%
Pecan, all	3310	4,416	33.4%
Cotton, all	3,216	2,418	-24.8%
Wheat for grain, all	717	1,333	85.9%

Source: US Census of Agriculture, 2017 & 2022.

TABLE 6.7: LIVESTOCK			
Livestock	**2017**	**2022**	**% Change**
Cattle and Calves	193,315	144,617	-25.2%
Sheep and Lambs	24,436	24,842	1.7%
Goats, all	3,453	1,794	-48.0%
Horses and ponies	1,344	1,045	-22.2%
Layers	1,459	1,330	-8.8%

Source: US Census of Agriculture, 2017 & 2022.

TABLE 6.8: VALUE OF SALES BY COMMODITY GROUP				
Agricultural Product	**2017**	**2022**	**2022 Rank**	**% Change**
Total value of agricultural products sold	$404,515,000	$446,613,000	2	10.4%
Value of crops including nursery and greenhouse	$42,991,000	$82,855,000	4	92.7%
Grains, oilseeds, dry beans, dry peas	$10,084,000	$34,336	1	-99.7%
Cotton and cottonseed	$46,585,000	(D)	7	-
Vegetables, melons, potatoes, sweet potatoes	$98,134,000	(D)	18	-
Fruits, tree nuts, berries	$15,351,000	$12,396,000	4	-19.2%
Other crops and hay	$15,090,000	$32,580,000	2	115.9%
Value of livestock, poultry, and their greenhouse	$361,524,000	$363,758,000	2	0.6%
Poultry and eggs	$4,201,000	(D)	23	
Cattle and calves	$47,685,000	$61,785,000	3	29.6%
Milk from cows	$308,509,000	$295,922,000	2	-4.1%
Hogs and pigs	$5,000	$15,000	9	200.0%
Sheep, goats, mohair, and milk	$4,005,000	(D)	1	-
Horses, ponies, mules, burros, donkeys	$421,000	$610,000	4	44.9%
Other animals and other animal products	$72,000	$26,000	18	-63.9%

Source: US Census of Agriculture, 2017 & 2022.

Mexico, and an increase of 10.4% from 2017. The value of Livestock, poultry, and their products accounted for about $364 million, ranking Chaves County second in the state. The "Other crops and hay" category, which includes cannabis, grew by 115.9%, also ranking Chaves County second in the state. Chaves County was ranked second in New Mexico for milk production from cows and third for cattle and calves, corresponding to the USDA dairy data.

New Mexico as a whole had 545,904 acres of irrigated land, a significant decrease of 12.8% from 2017 *(see Table 6.9).* In comparison, Chaves County had 42,794 acres of irrigated land, including both pastureland and harvested cropland, in 2022,

a decrease of 14.0% from 2017. Most of the irrigated cropland is located to the east and southeast of Roswell. Amongst surrounding counties, Otero County was the only county to have gained irrigated land between 2017 and 2022.

TABLE 6.9: IRRIGATED LAND IN ACRES

County	2017	2022	% Change
CHAVES COUNTY	49,755	42,794	-14.0%
Eddy County	31,525	30,351	-3.7%
De Baca County	7,620	7,260	-4.7%
Lea County	42,894	41,468	-3.3%
Otero County	4,681	7,159	52.9%
Roosevelt County	44,499	35,743	-19.7%
New Mexico	626,034	545,904	-12.8%

Source: US Census of Agriculture, 2017 & 2022.

Value-added Agriculture

Value-added agriculture is an important component to the agricultural production industry and involves transforming raw agricultural products into processed goods. Cheese is an important value-added product in New Mexico, which has become the 4th-largest producer of cheese in the United States, supplying 7% of the nation's cheese.

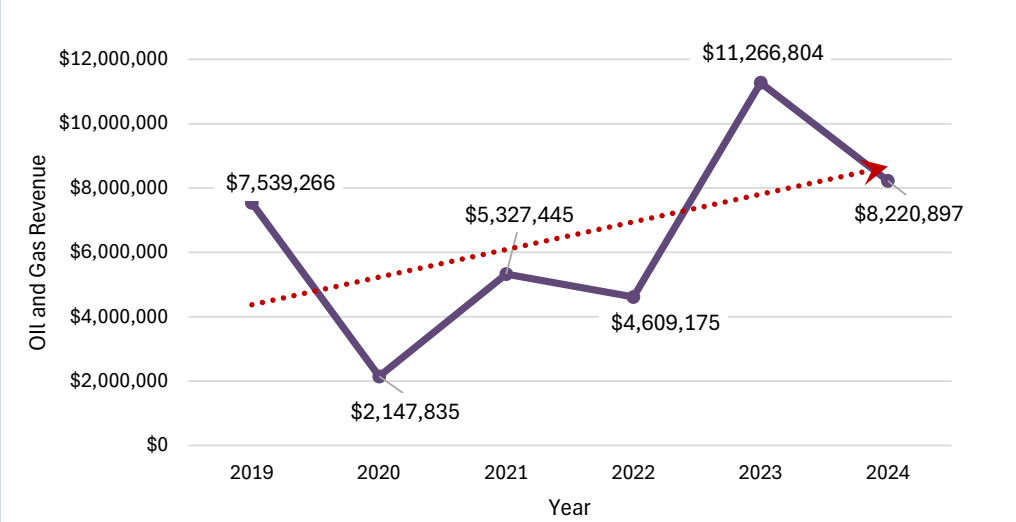
In Chaves County, the largest value-added agricultural business is Leprino Foods, a cheese producer headquartered in Denver. The Leprino Foods manufacturing facility, located within the Extra-Territorial Zone (ETZ), is the company's second-largest plant and the fourth-largest employer in Chaves County, employing 582 workers. Leprino Foods also operates a 450-acre farm that grows crops to feed its dairy cows. The company supplies cheese to several major pizza and restaurant chains nationwide and chose to establish its operations in Roswell primarily because of the area's strong dairy industry. Other food manufacturing entities in Chaves County include USA Beef Processing and Ranchline Beef Jerky.

In more recent years, cannabis production has emerged as a high-growth, value-added agricultural product since its legalization in New Mexico in 2021. Pecos Valley Productions is the 11th largest employer in Chaves County, with 214 employees. The business is locally owned and operated in Roswell, with a manufacturing facility for medicinal and recreational cannabis that features a 40,000-square-foot greenhouse and dispensary. Currently, Pecos Valley Productions operates 13 dispensaries statewide and anticipates growth in the future.

OIL & GAS

An important component of the economy in Chaves County is the oil and gas industry. While it is not one of the largest industry sectors in terms of the number of employees, oil and gas production plays an important role in the economy of the unincorporated portions of Chaves County. However, the oil and gas industry is prone to heavy fluctuations and should not be relied upon for sustainable, long-term economic development. Figure 6.5 illustrates the fluctuations between 2019 and 2024 for the 3rd quarter in the Mining and Oil and Gas Extraction industry in Chaves County, with an overall upward trend. The high point was 2023 with $11,266,804 in gross receipt taxes.

FIGURE 6.6: OIL AND GAS GROSS RECEIPT TAXES



Source: NM Tax and Revenue Department.

Oil and gas companies have operated in southeastern New Mexico since the first commercial production of oil in 1924. In 2025, there were over 87,000 active wells in Southeast New Mexico, with 6,800 of those in Chaves County. Revenues received by the state and counties vary depending on the average price of oil, natural gas, and liquids every month.

According to the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association, in 2024, the oil and gas industry contributed $7.4 billion (49%) to New Mexico's General Fund, which funds schools, hospitals, and other government services. Oil and gas production also contributed $2.9 billion to the Severance Tax Permanent Fund and the Land Grant Permanent Fund. While oil and gas production primarily occurs in southeast New Mexico (Permian Basin) and northwest New Mexico (San Juan Basin), the industry's revenue benefits the entire state. In FY2024, Chaves County received $315 million in oil and gas revenues.

Chaves County consistently ranks amongst the top five oil-producing counties in New Mexico *(see Table 6.7, page 106)*. All of the top oil-producing counties experienced an increase in oil production between 2023 and 2025, with Chaves County rising 19.1% and ranking fourth, behind Lea, Eddy, and San Juan counties.

Chaves County currently ranks fifth out of the natural gas producing counties in New Mexico *(see Table 6.8, page 106)*. Between 2023 and 2025, Chaves County experienced a 13.7% decrease in gas production. Chaves County is outpaced by the state's largest natural gas-producing counties, Eddy and Lea, which both increased production by 26.9% and 25.6%, respectively.

TABLE 6.7: OIL PRODUCTION				
County and Rank	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**% Change**
Lea County (1)	33,833,572	33,018,446	35,342,054	15.1%
Eddy County (2)	22,549,893	23,852,064	25,950,204	4.5%
San Juan County (3)	646,849	505,563	607,165	-6.1%
CHAVES COUNTY (4)	145,943	169,849	173,823	19.1%
Rio Arriba County (5)	68,424	67,053	108,649	58.8%

Volume (Barrels)
Source: New Mexico Oil Conservation Division.

TABLE 6.8: NATURAL GAS PRODUCTION				
County and Rank	**2023**	**2024**	**2025**	**% Change**
Eddy County (1)	112,518,687	124192613	142,742,133	26.9%
Lea County (2)	95,882,053	102890919	120,451,053	25.6%
San Juan County (3)	23,238,031	22,158,889	23,334,173	0.4%
Rio Arriba County(4)	19,096,862	19,753,507	21,674,513	13.5%
CHAVES COUNTY (5)	871,867	830,038	752,394	-13.7%

Volume (Thousand Cubic Feet)
Source: New Mexico Oil Conservation Division.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES/HEALTH CARE/SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Roswell Independent School District (RISD) is the largest single employer in Chaves County, employing 1,609 administrators, teachers, and support staff across 12 elementary schools, four middle schools, and four high schools. This industry sector also includes the Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur school districts, which are the largest employers in their respective communities.

Significant employment in this industry is also generated by Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell, which employs 225 individuals, and provides training, licensure, and associate's degrees, and the New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI), which employs 368 administrators, teachers, and support staff. NMMI experienced the highest enrollment in 16 years for fall 2025, with a 23% increase in new cadet enrollment and an 81% retention rate. NMMI provides boarding for cadets, who are an integral part of the community.

The Eastern New Mexico Medical Center, located in Roswell, is a 162-bed facility with inpatient and outpatient care. The Medical Center provides a variety of medical specialties, as well as behavioral health and medical services. It has 133 active physicians and employs 662 workers.



Eastern New Mexico Medical Center.

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Other healthcare providers in Chaves County include Lovelace Regional Hospital (203 employees), Casa Maria Healthcare (198 employees), and Kymera Independent Physicians (145 employees). Participants in the Community Survey pointed to a need to expand the healthcare and medical industry in Chaves County to support future growth.

MANUFACTURING

Manufacturing in Chaves County is diverse and comprised of small manufacturers that contribute to the local economy. The largest manufacturer in Chaves County is Bilt Wise Structures, a modular home construction company located in Roswell. BiltWise Structures operates a 420,000 square-foot facility and employs 70 workers. Other companies, such as Christmas by Krebs, a manufacturer of Christmas ornaments, are long-standing businesses in Chaves County.

AVIATION-RELATED INDUSTRY

Aviation and aviation-related industries are fast-growing in Chaves County, driven by the Roswell Air Center (RAC) and partnerships with the ENMU-Roswell Aviation Program. Dean Baldwin Painting is an aircraft painting company that employs 108 workers and is proficient in the latest industry-approved, environmentally-friendly processes. AerSale employs 64 workers and provides aftermarket support for aircraft, including repairs, assembly, and the sale of aircraft components. CAVU Aerospace provides aircraft assembly services and employs 52 workers. The RAC has the capacity to expand aviation services and manufacturing, including advanced manufacturing with robotics, 3D printing, and AI to create lighter, more complex, and more efficient aircraft.

GOVERNMENT

The City of Roswell is a major employer in Chaves County, with 662 employees, followed by Chaves County, with 249 employees. In addition, several federal and state government agencies have field offices in Roswell that contribute to the overall public administration employment numbers.

6.4 ECONOMIC STRENGTHS & ASSETS

There are several economic strengths and assets present in Chaves County that could potentially help spur economic growth. These are summarized below.

ROSWELL AIR CENTER

The Roswell Air Center (RAC) is a strong community asset, both to Chaves County and the City of Roswell. Formerly the Walker Air Force Base, the RAC is located four miles south of downtown Roswell, within an island of incorporated land that is served by municipal water and sewer infrastructure. When the Walker Air Force Base closed in 1967, the City of Roswell converted the facility into the Roswell Airport. Much of the original base housing was demolished, but a portion was converted to affordable housing.

The RAC contains two runways, including a 10,000-foot crosswind runway and a 13,000-foot regular runway, an aeronautical area of 2,185 acres, and three fuel storage tanks with a combined storage capacity of 2,676,870 gallons. The RAC

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also has over 5,000 acres of industrial-zoned land and room to accommodate new businesses. The runways, year-round mild climate, and strategic location make the RAC an excellent facility for any aviation-related business.

The RAC primarily functions as a commercial passenger airport. American Airlines offers daily direct flights from Roswell to Dallas-Fort Worth and Phoenix. The RAC also accommodates private planes with free overnight parking. An 800-space aircraft hangar is available for private plane storage.



Military training planes flying at the 2025 National Championship Air Races and Air Show at the Roswell Air Center.

The RAC has become a major training center for avionics, equipment maintenance programs, and law enforcement. The US Navy and the Boeing Company use the long runways for pilot and aircraft testing, a function that the RAC is looking to expand.

The RAC is poised to become the hub of aviation technology and training in the region through its existing businesses and by attracting others from across the country. The ENMU-Roswell Aviation Program is also conveniently located at the RAC for business and aviation-related instruction and training.

The RAC complex is located in a designated Opportunity Zone. The City of Roswell recently approved the development of a portion of the industrial park for additional hangars, which will provide long-term aircraft storage. There is also a need to upgrade infrastructure, for which the City of Roswell has allocated funds.

The City of Roswell was awarded a multi-year contract to host the National Championship Air Races and Air Show through a highly competitive process. In 2025, the event drew participants from across the nation and featured seven classes, with aircraft flying between 50 and 250 feet and reaching speeds above 500 mph. The event also included historic and modern aircraft on display, air shows, and a Discovery Zone to encourage STEM education.

HAGERMAN INDUSTRIAL PARK

The Hagerman Industrial Park, an 80-acre property located on the north side of Hagerman and adjacent to the BNSF railway line, was developed in 2010 after many years of planning. It is the home of Fat Man's Beef Jerky, which occupies a 6,000 square foot manufacturing facility. The industrial park received financial assistance from the US Department of Commerce-Economic Development Administration, US Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program, New Mexico Legislative

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Capital Outlay Program, New Mexico Economic Development Department, and the New Mexico Finance Authority. Fat Man's Jerky is a growing business in the region.

ARTS & CULTURE

Chaves County and Roswell has greatly benefited from tourism related to the International UFO Museum and Research Center, which is located on Main Street within Roswell's MainStreet District. The Museum contains exhibits and information about the 1947 Roswell Incident, UFO sightings, and a research library. In addition to the UFO Museum, there are a variety of other tourist attractions, such as the Roswell Museum and Art Center, Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, McBride Museum at the New Mexico Military Institute, and the Historical Center for Southeast New Mexico Museum. The Roswell Museum's Artist-in-Residence Program, established in 1967, provides studio-based visual artists with the unique opportunity to focus on their work for an entire year.

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 Census of Agriculture, in 2022 farms and ranches generated $1.26 billion in income from agri-tourism, an increase of 12.4% from 2017. The map below shows agri-tourism income generated by county. While Chaves County did not report any income, several other rural counties in New Mexico did, demonstrating there are economic development opportunities for Chaves County in this sector.

Examples of agri-tourism include:

- Hands-on farm activities: U-pick fruit farms, animal interactions
- Events: Harvest festivals, weddings, large-group gatherings
- Outdoor Activities: Hunting, fishing, horseback riding, biking, and hiking
- Educational and Experiential: Farm tours, farm-to-table classes, local farm product tastings, and demonstrations on farming practices
- Lodging and Dining: Overnight guest houses, farm camping, meals made with on-site or locally grown ingredients
- Direct Sales: Fresh produce and ready-made goods directly from farms

Agri-tourism presents a unique opportunity to combine the rich heritage of Chaves County farms and ranchers to tourism while providing educational and social benefits to 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 operation. Seasonal events can be marketed along with outdoor recreation and community events, which can draw visitors to Chaves County for multiple experiences.

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OUTDOOR RECREATION

Outdoor recreation presents a significant opportunity for economic development, contributing to increased sales at local businesses, facilitating job creation, and enhancing Chaves County's tax revenue. Southeast New Mexico is home to several regional outdoor recreation facilities that draw visitors to Chaves County, including Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Mescalero Sands Recreation Area, Bottomless Lakes State Park, Brantley Lake State Park, and Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park. In addition to those regional facilities, shooting sports, golf, and disc golf provide other local outdoor recreation opportunities. A brief description for each of these outdoor recreation facilities and amenities follow below.

Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge

The Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge provides an oasis in the desert approximately 12 miles northeast of Roswell, where the Southern Plains meet the Chihuahuan Desert. The Refuge is one of the most biologically significant wetland areas of the Pecos River watershed system. The Refuge is 24,563 acres and plays a crucial role providing a wintering habitat for migratory birds, such as sandhill cranes, snow geese, and ducks as well as a variety of shore birds and more than 100 species of dragonflies and damselflies. The Refuge is situated along the floodplain of the Pecos River, where sinkholes have created Paleozoic aquifers dissolving gypsum deposits above. Visitors can partake in a variety of activities designed to encourage viewing of wildlife and nature.



Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Source: US Fish and Wildlife Service.

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Bottomless Lakes State Park

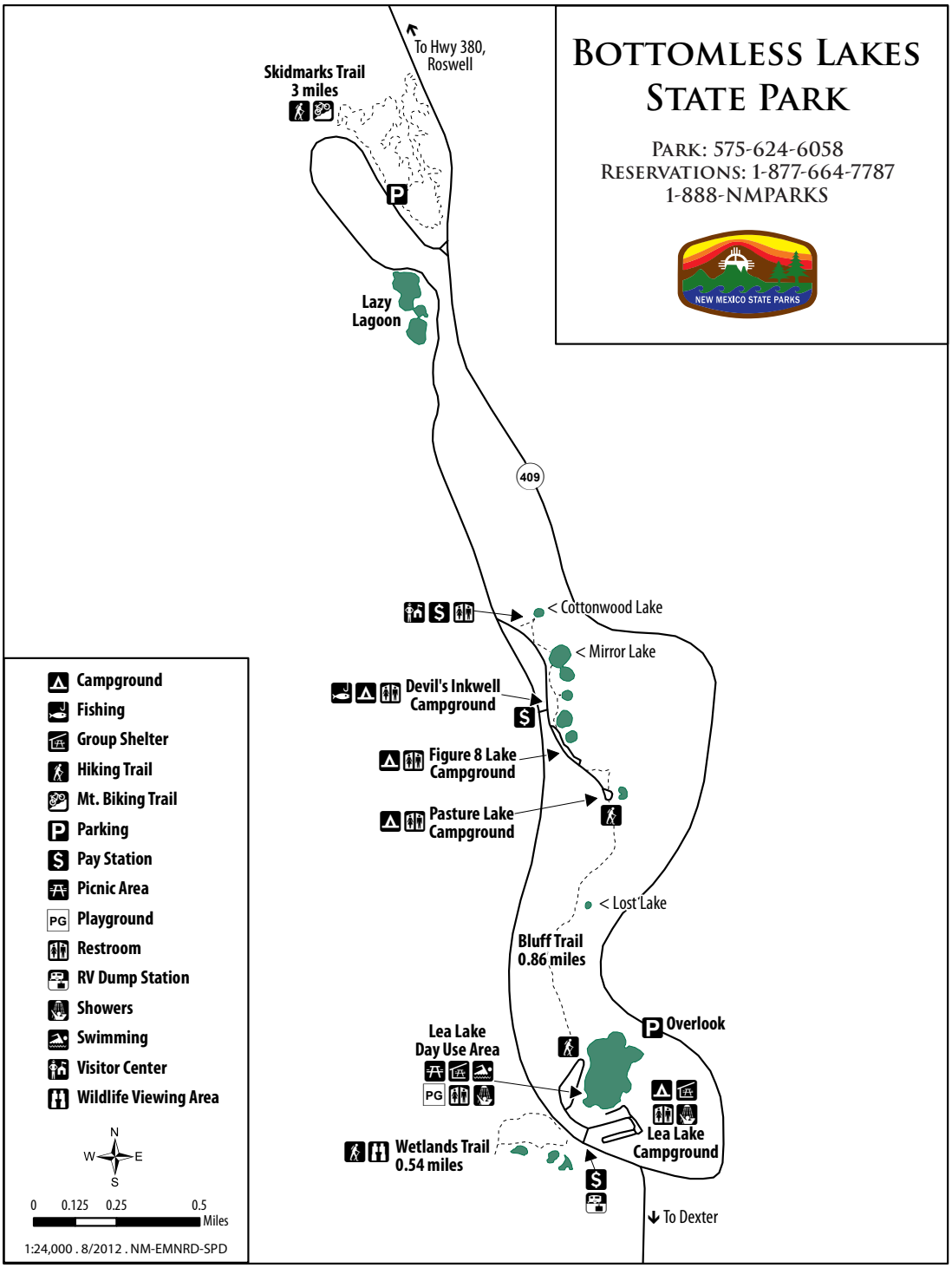
Bottomless Lakes State Park is New Mexico State Park's oldest park facility, which founded on November 18, 1933, by the Commissioner of New Mexico Public Lands. The Park is located approximately 8.5 miles south of E. 2nd Street on State Road 409, approximately 13 miles southeast of Roswell. The most prominent feature of Bottomless State Park is the chain of eight lakes, which are formed by sinkholes ranging from 17 to 90 feet in depth. Bottomless Lakes State Park was the regional attraction identified as the most frequented by Community Survey respondents.

Swimming, camping, fishing, hiking, biking, and boating are the most popular activities Bottomless Lake State Park. There are three designated trails within the Park. Swimming, boating, and scuba diving are allowed in Lea Lake only. The Park has 37 developed campsites to the southeast of Lea Lake and ten additional campsites near the lakes to the north, but these sites do not have any utility hookups. The Park also has 24 day-use sites that have picnic shelters with tables and grills, and a group shelter. The peak months for visitation at the Park are between May and August, with June being the highest month.



Bottomless Lake State Park.

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Source: EMNRD.

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Mescalero Sands Recreation Area

The Mescalero Sands Recreation Area is one of Chaves County's unique outdoor recreation destinations, offering opportunities for off-highway vehicle (OHV) use, camping, sightseeing, and nature-based recreation. Located east of Roswell on BLM land, Mescalero Sands contains more than 610 acres of active sand dunes, some exceeding 90 feet in height, that attract off-highway vehicles (OHV), dirt bikes, dune buggies, and sand rail enthusiasts from across the region. In addition to motorized recreation, the dunes, cottonwood groves, and desert landscape provide opportunities for outdoor exploration, photography, wildlife viewing, and dispersed camping.



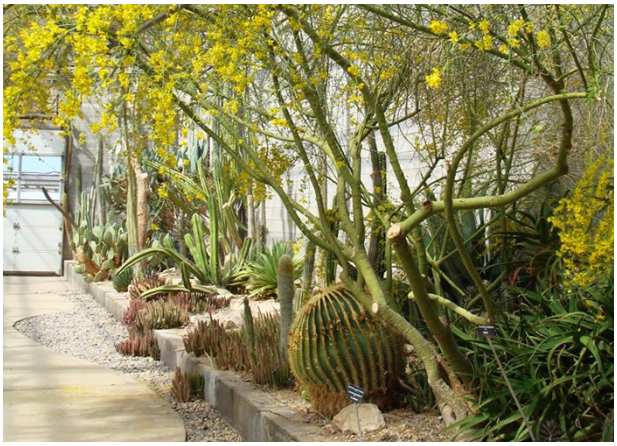
Mescalero Sands North Dune OHV Area. Source: NM True.

As a distinctive recreation resource within southeast New Mexico, Mescalero Sands contributes to Chaves County's outdoor tourism economy and expands the variety of recreational experiences available to residents and visitors. As demand for outdoor recreation continues to grow, Mescalero Sands is an important asset for tourism development, economic diversification, and promoting Chaves County as a regional recreation destination.



Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park

The Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park, established in 1971, is a native wildlife zoo accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. The 1,100-acre park is located in the far northeast area of Carlsbad and exhibits more than 40 species of animals and hundreds of plant species native to the Chihuahuan Desert. The Park contains hiking trails, picnic areas, and group facilities for events, but no campgrounds.



Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park in Carlsbad. Source: EMNRD.

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The Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park welcomed 37,418 visitors in 2024. The New Mexico State Parks Division wants to increase the number of visitors and is working with local government and private entities to market Living Desert Zoo & Gardens State Park to new residents of Carlsbad.

Brantley Lake State Park

Brantley Lake State Park is located in Eddy County and within the northern area of the Chihuahuan Desert. It is the southernmost lake in New Mexico and is surrounded by the forested Sacramento and Guadalupe Mountains to the west, arid southwestern tablelands to the north, and the high plains that continue on into Texas to the east. The Lake was created by the Brantley Dam in the 1980s and is fed by the Pecos River. The Pecos River flows from northeast New Mexico, starting in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains east of Santa Fe, flowing south to Texas, and into the Rio Grande. The Park is accessed from US 285, which runs from Colorado south into New Mexico, through the City of Artesia before passing Brantley Lake, and continuing to the City of Carlsbad.

Fishing and boating are popular activities at Brantley Lake, as are camping, walking and hiking, horseback riding, and picnicking. Information on the Park is shared through interpretive signs and educational programs. Brantley Lake splits the State Park into east and west sides, with the Seven Rivers Day Use Area and primitive camping on the west side of Brantley Lake and the Visitor Center, 52 developed campsites, and staff facilities on the east side. Seasonal camping in recreational vehicles has been popular since the Park opened. Tent camping can be difficult at the Park due to high winds and lack of vegetative screening. In 2024, there were 97,738 visitors to Brantley Lake State Park. The peak months for visitation at the Park are between May and July, with June being the highest month.



Brantley Lake State Park, with Brantley Dam in the background.

Shooting Sports

Shooting sports opportunities in Chaves County include a variety of rifle, pistol, shotgun, and action-shooting disciplines. The Roswell Gun Club maintains multiple outdoor ranges that support recreational target shooting, firearms training, marksmanship practice, and organized competitions. Competitive events include benchrest shooting, USPSA practical shooting, military rifle and firearm competitions, and other organized matches that are open to both members and the public during scheduled events.

Local clubs support specialized shotgun sports, including trap and skeet shooting, and cowboy action shooting activities that recreate historic western-era firearms competitions. Chapparral Skeet Club is a member-owned shooting facility in Roswell that is dedicated to clay target sports, and offers four skeet fields, two trap fields, and a five-stand range. These facilities and clubs provide recreational opportunities for residents while attracting participants and spectators from outside the county for organized events and tournaments.

Golf and Disc Golf

Golf and disc golf facilities in Chaves County are concentrated in Roswell and provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Traditional golf is provided on three primary courses: the Nancy Lopez Golf Course at Spring River, Roswell Municipal Golf Course; the New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI) Golf Course, a public 18-hole facility with practice amenities; and the historic Roswell Country Club, which has served the community since 1905. These facilities offer a range of recreational, instructional, and competitive golf opportunities while contributing to local tourism and quality of life.

Disc golf is an increasingly popular sport. The Enchanted Lands Disc Golf Course provides a well-established public course within a community park setting. A smaller nine-hole course at ENMU-Roswell expands access to the sport and offers opportunities for beginners, students, and casual players. These facilities support active lifestyles, affordable outdoor recreation, and community wellness while enhancing the diversity of recreational amenities available throughout Chaves County.



Nancy Lopez Golf Course at Spring River.

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6.5 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

There are several organizations devoted to promoting economic development in Chaves County. These are the organizations that Chaves County government is currently supporting in the effort to bring economic growth to the community.

ROSWELL-CHAVES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The primary economic development partner to Chaves County is the Roswell-Chaves County Economic Development Corporation (RCCEDC), which provides a wealth of information for prospective businesses, developers, and site selection consultants. Services provided by the RCCEDC include:

- In-Depth Market Data and Analysis
- Project specific economic impact analysis and operational cost analysis that includes tax assessments, incentives, wages, and utilities.
- Site-selection assistance through property listings and individual site visits.
- Connections to key regional partners including universities, job and workforce programs, regulatory authorities, and resources for business start-ups.

The RCCEDC has approximately 180-190 members and derives funding from the City of Roswell, Chaves County, and memberships. The RCCEDC focuses on business recruitment, retention and expansion of existing businesses, workforce development, and working with the City of Roswell and Chaves County to develop community amenities that increase the quality-of-life in the region. The RCCEDC prides itself on developing relationships it has built with local leaders and businesses.

Along with local governments, the RCCEDC has identified three key industries to promote in Chaves County:

- Aviation: The RCCEDC markets the RAC as a location for advanced technical manufacturing of aircraft and aviation related industries.
- Value-added Agriculture: Working with the area's farmers and ranchers, value added agriculture is a growing industry providing jobs and utilizing the agricultural network in Chaves County.
- Advanced Manufacturing: The RAC Industrial Park contains the necessary infrastructure to support advanced manufacturing operations including heavy-industrial or renewable.

Marketing these industries is a key function of the RCCEDC. The organization is focused on increasing these industries throughout Chaves County, especially in Roswell at the RAC and the Hagerman Industrial Park. However, The RCCEDC believes that different types industrial development, such as warehousing and manufacturing, is appropriate in locations along the main highways in Chaves County and does not need to be limited to the industrial parks.

ROSWELL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Roswell Chamber of Commerce promotes the City of Roswell and Chaves County to people seeking to relocate in the area. Chaves County is a major location

for people searching for a place to retire. The Chamber's economic development director assists in business recruitment and retention. The Roswell Chamber of Commerce has over 500 members.

ROSWELL HISPANO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Roswell Hispano Chamber of Commerce's mission is to assist in the growth of Hispanic-owned businesses in Roswell and Chaves County. The Chamber acts as a liaison between the Hispanic and non-Hispanic economic community. Events held by the organization include Go Latinas, CASA Christmas Tree, Pozole and Loteria Night, ENMU-R Cultural Awareness, City of Roswell Clean-up, and Small Business Workshops.

6.6 ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

While Chaves County has many economic assets that could potentially spur economic development, it also has some economic challenges that should be addressed in an effort to promote viable and sustainable economic growth. These challenges are summarized below.

CLEAR VISION NEEDED

Developing a clear vision that has gained the consensus of community leaders and residents will help spur economic growth by identifying the type and nature of economic development that should occur. Some of the questions that could potentially be answered by development of an economic vision include:

- What types of industries are appropriate for Chaves County?
- What is the appropriate size for the industries that should be recruited to Chaves County?
- Should Chaves County recruit industries that are related to existing industries or should new and different types of industries be sought?
- What types of incentives are Chaves County willing to offer to businesses looking to expand, relocate, or start-up?

WATER

Economic growth that occurs in Chaves County should be mindful of the water situation in southeast New Mexico, especially given the fact that New Mexico as a whole has been in an extended drought. Data centers, which are becoming a significant land use in New Mexico, require millions of gallons of water for server cooling daily. As such, water consumption related to data centers should be a factor in considering approval of these projects in Chaves County.

Prudent use of water in Chaves County is especially critical given the importance of agriculture to the community's economic well-being. Cannabis farms consume more water than traditional crops in Chaves County, such as alfalfa and silage. As cannabis becomes a more significant agricultural product, it is essential to incorporate irrigation and conservation techniques, such as drip or subsurface irrigation, into the planting plan and to ensure water rights are in place. In New Mexico, growers must demonstrate that a legal water supply is available before securing a cannabis license.

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To ensure responsible development, Chaves County will work closely with the Pecos Valley Artesian Conservation District (PVACD) to evaluate the potential water consumption impacts of proposed projects on a case-by-case basis. This collaborative approach will help balance economic development opportunities with the long-term sustainability of the region's groundwater resources while supporting informed decision-making for future growth.

INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

A lack of infrastructure needed for economic development is one of the most important limitations to economic growth. Chaves County should ensure areas identified for commercial and industrial development have adequate electricity, water and wastewater systems, stormwater management, broadband, and internet connectivity. These sites should be ready-to-build with utilities in place.

WORKFORCE TRAINING

Community Survey respondents identified more of a need for workforce training and development if new industries are to be attracted to the area. Respondents primarily identified computer technology and business administration as the top options for workforce training. ENMU-Roswell provides customized training, special service programs, and aviation maintenance technology. Continued efforts to match these education programs to meet the needs of employers is critical to the success of Chaves County's economic development efforts. Chaves County should work to ensure the business community is aware of the economic development incentives offered by the New Mexico Economic Development Department, including the Job Training Incentive Program (JTIP) which provides funding for training new employees in newly created jobs and reimbursing companies for a significant portion of training costs.

AIR SERVICE

Economic development in Chaves County could significantly improve with the continued expansion of air service at the Roswell Air Center (RAC). Currently, Chaves County benefits from excellent air service facilities at the RAC; however, commercial flights are limited to the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport operated by American Airlines and to Denver operated by United Airlines. Daily, private aircraft arrive at the RAC, where they can lease hangars for storage. Expanding air service would promote business development and enhance the utilization of the RAC.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

Economic impacts on Chaves County and its citizens should be an integral and critical aspect of and require legal standing and coordination in formulating plans for the recovery of any federal or state listed threatened or endangered species. This should include any proposed introduction or re-introduction of a species by artificial actions of government agencies or personnel. This is currently one of the functions of the Public Lands Advisory Committee.

RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

Chaves County has recognized the necessity to establish regulations for the expanding renewable energy sector. The *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* addresses wind farm development standards but lacks development standards for renewable utility-scale projects, including solar and associated battery storage facilities. The

advancement of renewable energy is a vital component for economic growth in Chaves County. It is important to develop and implement clear guidelines that not only safeguard agricultural lands, but also to ensure the responsible decommissioning of these installations and facilitating the return of the land to productive use.

6.7 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 1

Support economic development efforts to help retain, strengthen, and expand existing businesses, as well as create new jobs and business development opportunities within Chaves County.

Objectives:

- *Objective 1.a: To establish and maintain partnerships with other local, regional, and state economic entities to promote economic development in Chaves County.*
- *Objective 1.b: To maintain the vitality of the agricultural industry.*
- *Objective 1.c: To support the creation of a small business incubator to encourage start-up businesses.*
- *Objective 1.d: To build a quality labor force.*
- *Objective 1.e: To provide infrastructure planning in the ETZ to support economic development.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 1.1

Chaves County shall continue to participate with the Roswell-Chaves County Economic Development Corporation (RCCEDC), Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District (SNMEDD), and the New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD) on local and regional economic development programs, commissions, and initiatives and actions.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 1.2

Chaves County shall participate in infrastructure planning with the City of Roswell for the ETZ.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 1.3

Chaves County shall work with third party organizations to convene business enhancement training forums on a variety of topics, including the following:

- Customer service;
- Marketing and customer market expansion for the aviation, manufacturing and agriculture, and renewable energy sectors;
- Marketing and advertising for retail, tourism, etc.;
- Local, state and federal technical and financial assistance programs; and
- Acquiring government contracts.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 2

Enhance economic development opportunities through Chaves County's permitting and regulatory processes.

Objectives:

- *Objective 2.a: To ensure Chaves County's land use regulations do not negatively impact economic development initiatives.*
- *Objective 2.b: To facilitate the growth of aviation-related activities and manufacturing industries.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 2.1

Chaves County shall develop a business license program that includes, but is not limited to registration procedures; application forms and checklists; fee schedule; and links to the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department website.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 2.2

In conjunction with other amendments to the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* identified under Land Use Actions, Chaves County shall add high-tech manufacturing, data centers, and battery energy etorage systems to the permissive land uses in the County Zoning Ordinance and shall work with the City of Roswell to address those land uses within the ETZ.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3

Attract industries that respect and are mindful of Chaves County's limited natural resources and are committed to protecting the environment.

Objectives:

- *Objective 3.a: To develop specific business recruitment target industry groups.*
- *Objective 3.b: To create a marketing and response program for new businesses.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 3.1

Chaves County shall develop a list of specific business/industry recruitment targets. The list will include, but not be limited to:

- Agriculture-related businesses, including value-added agriculture;
- Complementary / supporting services for existing manufacturers around the state and region;
- Manufacturing and distribution centers;
- Complementary / support industries for healthcare;
- Complementary / support services for aviation and aviation technology industries; and
- High-tech industries.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 3.2

Chaves County shall support the RCCEDC's efforts to actively engage in marketing and enhancement activities to promote local businesses.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4

Support the partnership between Chaves County, City of Roswell, and the Roswell Chaves County Economic Development Corporation in attracting new businesses and promoting economic development at the Roswell Air Center (RAC).

Objective:

- *Objective 4.a: To increase economic development opportunities in Chaves County.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 4.1

Chaves County shall promote and support new business development and the expansion of existing businesses at the RAC.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 4.2

Chaves County shall assess the potential for the following uses to locate at the RAC:

- Aviation-related industries, including aircraft maintenance;
- Manufacturing and distribution centers;
- Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell conference center and student housing; and
- Workforce housing through rehabilitating onsite housing units.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5

Encourage development in other industrial centers in the area that accommodate industries that are not compatible with RAC.

Objective:

- *Objective 5.a: To work with the towns of Hagerman, Dexter, and Lake Arthur to attract new businesses to the Hagerman Industrial Park and future industrial parks within unincorporated Chaves County.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 5.1

Chaves County shall evaluate the potential for commercial and industrial development as illustrated on the *Future Land Use map*.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 5.2

Chaves County shall continue to identify sites within the County for economic development and evaluate and prioritize the delivery of infrastructure, roadway access, and determines ownership status and zoning to serve future commercial and industrial development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 5.3

Chaves County shall coordinate with the New Mexico Economic Development Department's site-readiness program.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6

Promote and support workforce training in order to attract high quality jobs, new businesses, and industries.

Objectives:

- *Objective 6.a: To ensure Chaves County residents are adequately prepared for new employment opportunities in targeted industries.*
- *Objective 6.b: To link state and federal employment and training program services to local and regional business retention and attraction initiatives.*
- *Objective 6.c: To match ENMU-Roswell Community College and career/ technical education provider training programs to the needs of area employers and prospective industries.*
- *Objective 6.d: To partner with public schools to achieve higher levels of employability and job readiness for students.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 6.1

Sponsor and promote job expos that focus on STEAM technologies, including life sciences, engineering, computer science, natural sciences, etc., that will help encourage young adults in Chaves County to enter those fields.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 6.2

Chaves County shall market and encourage workforce training and workforce investment programs offered by the New Mexico Economic Development Department.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 6.3

Chaves County shall promote a business/school partnership with the Roswell Independent School District, New Mexico Military Institute, and Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell that provides students with effective preparation for existing and future employers.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 6.4

Chaves County shall continue its partnership with the County Extension Service by promoting agricultural education, outreach, and research-based programs that help producers adapt to challenges, strengthen local agriculture, and prepare for future agricultural opportunities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 7

Promote and increase tourism to points of interest in Chaves County and in cooperation with other local and state agencies and organizations.

Objectives:

- *Objective 7.a: To achieve a greater economic impact from tourism in Chaves County.*
- *Objective 7.b: To facilitate Chaves County becoming a regional destination for outdoor recreation tourism.*
- *Objective 7.c: To recognize agri-tourism as an important component of tourism-related economic development in Chaves County.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 7.1
Chaves County shall promote tourism in Roswell, Chaves County, and Southeast New Mexico, including outdoor recreation opportunities at Bitter Lake Wildlife Refuge, Mescalero Sands Recreation Area, Bottomless Lakes and Brantley Lake State Parks, arts and culture attractions, including the Roswell Museum, Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art and other local art galleries, and local shooting sports and golf and disc golf facilities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 7.2
Chaves County shall promote agri-tourism businesses and activities where visitors can experience life on a working farm or ranch.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 7.3
Chaves County shall support and continue to participate in community events, such as the Eastern New Mexico State Fair, National Championship Air Races held at the Roswell Air Center, Roswell Chile Cheese Festival, etc.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 7.4
Chaves County shall coordinate with the City of Roswell in convening a meeting of local and regional tourism partners and marketing events.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 8

Coordinate with and secure legal standing within any federal or state agencies on endangered species to ensure economic impacts to the community are an integral aspect of any recovery plan.

Objectives:

- *Objective 8.a: To ensure minimal negative economic impact on the community from the formulation of plans for the recovery of any federal or state listed threatened or endangered species.*
- *Objective 8.b: To assist other governmental agencies and private industries with habitat protection for threatened and endangered species in the interest of greater economic prosperity of Chaves County.*
- *Objective 8.c: To ensure minimal negative impact from any proposed introduction or re-introduction of a species by artificial actions of governmental agencies or personnel.*
- *Objective 8.d: To minimize the negative economic impact to the community in regard to public lands.*

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 8.1
Chaves County shall secure legal standing and require coordination with the formulation of recovery plans of any federal or state listed threatened or endangered species, including any proposed introduction or re-introduction of a species by artificial actions of governmental agencies or personnel to ensure minimal negative impact on the community. Chaves County shall coordinate with the Chaves County Land Council (CCLC), extraction industries, agricultural community, general public, and other governmental agencies to assist with habitat protection plans.

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7 HOUSING

SUPPORTING A SAFE, DIVERSE, AND ATTAINABLE HOUSING STOCK

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Housing element is to provide an overview of housing characteristics within Chaves County and identify strategies that can be pursued to ensure that no County resident is deprived of the opportunity for shelter. Chaves County is not directly involved in providing housing to County residents and does not operate a housing office as part of its local government structure but is able to participate and provide support for affordable housing development either on its own or in partnership with the City of Roswell and/or the towns of Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur.



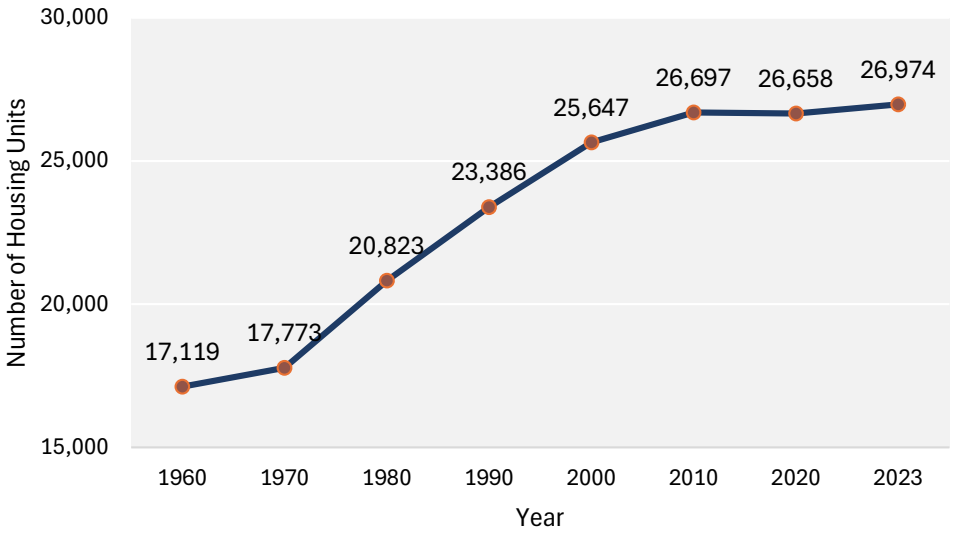
House on Thompson Road.

7.2 HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

HOUSING UNITS

The US Census includes the number of housing units as part of the decennial census data every ten years. In Chaves County, between 1960 and 2020, the number of housing units increased by 55.7%, from 17,119 to 26,658, and with an average annual increase of 1.0% *(see Figure 7.1)*. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of housing units in Chaves County slightly decreased from 26,697 to 26,658. The ACS housing unit estimate for 2023 indicates a slight increase from 2020, rising to 26,974 total housing units in Chaves County.

FIGURE 7.1: HOUSING UNITS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census Counts, 1960 – 2020 & ACS 5-Year Estimates 2023.

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Of those units, 20,089 were in Roswell, 435 in Dexter, 305 in Hagerman, and 153 in Lake Arthur. This leaves 5,812 housing units in unincorporated Chaves County *(see Table 7.1).* Only Roswell and unincorporated Chaves County experienced growth in housing units between 2013 and 2023, and Hagerman experiencing the largest decrease of 34.4%.

TABLE 7.1: HOUSING UNITS

Place	2013	2023	% Change
Roswell	19,835	20,089	1.3%
Dexter	468	435	-7.1%
Hagerman	465	305	-34.4%
Lake Arthur	164	153	-6.7%
Chaves County (unincorporated)	5,716	5,812	1.7%
Total	26,648	26,974	1.2%

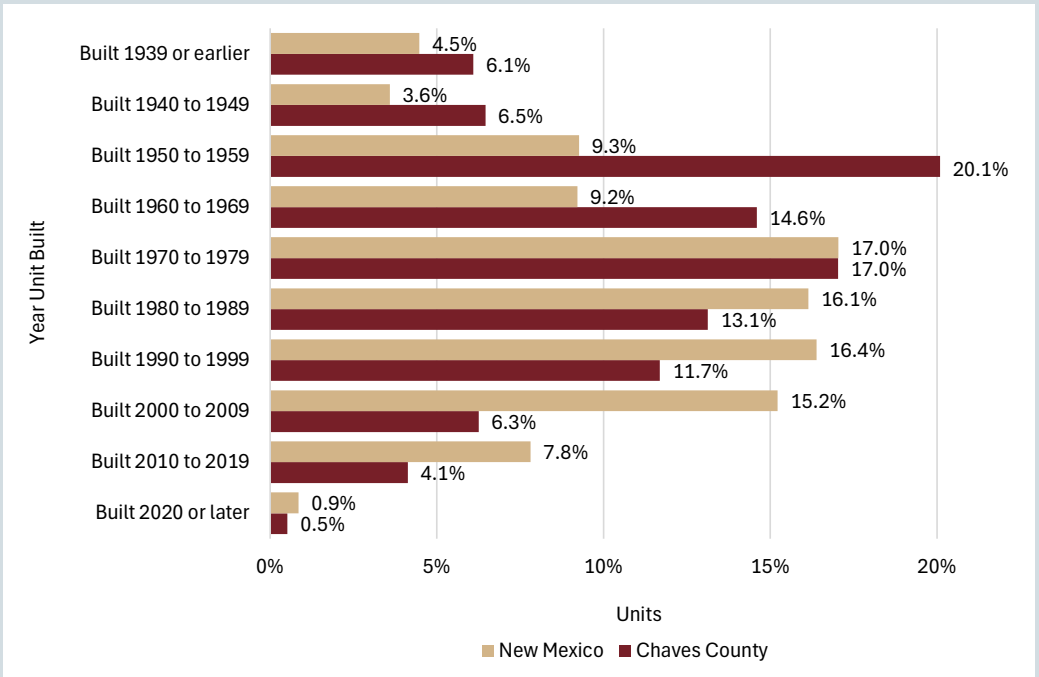
Source: ACS 5-year Estimates, 2013 & 2023.

HOUSING AGE

The age of housing stock is a particularly strong indicator of community trends and characteristics and can indicate how attractive a community is to potential new residents. If the housing stock is older, the community may not be as attractive to incoming population. The presence of an older housing stock could also indicate the need for major repairs, inefficient heating and cooling systems, and structural issues.

The median year in which structures were built in Chaves County was 1969, which was significantly older than the 1981 median year in New Mexico. Approximately 64.3% of the housing stock in Chaves County was built before 1980 *(see Figure 7.2)*. The period with the highest rate of home construction in Chaves County occurred between 1950 and 1959, accounting for 20.1% of the housing stock. In contrast, 43.6% of New Mexico's housing stock was built after 1980, with the greatest number of homes constructed between 1970 and 1979, which made up 17.0% *(see Figure 7.2).*

FIGURE 7.2: YEAR HOUSING BUILT



Source: ACS, 5-year Estimates, 2013 & 2023.

HOUSING UNITS IN STRUCTURE

In 2023, approximately 71.4% of the housing stock in Chaves County was single-family detached dwelling units, which was higher than the New Mexico average of 64.6% *(see Table 7.2)*. Mobile homes were the second most common type of housing, comprising 13.5%, less than the state's 15.8%. Chaves County had a low percentage of housing that contained between 3 to 19 units. However, housing that contained 20 or more units was similar to New Mexico, 4.1% versus 4.8%.

TABLE 7.2: HOUSING UNITS IN STRUCTURE

Housing Units	Chaves County	New Mexico
Total Housing Units	26,794	949,524
1-unit, detached	71.4%	64.6%
1-unit, attached	2.2%	3.7%
2 units	3.1%	1.7%
3 or 4 units	2.4%	4.0%
5 to 9 units	1.3%	2.8%
10 to 19 units	1.3%	2.3%
20 or more units	4.1%	4.8%
Mobile home	13.5%	15.8%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0.7%	0.3%

Source: ACS 5-year Estimates, 2023.

Chaves County recently updated residential development standards within the ETZ to allow for a variety of housing types with up to six bedrooms. Under these standards, multi-family development could include configurations such as six-plex with a one-bedroom per unit or three-bedroom unit duplex, provided the building does not exceed six bedrooms total (see Chapter 4: Land Use for more information on development standards). These changes may lead to an increase in multi-family housing development in the future.

7.3 HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Housing characteristics, such as household type, housing occupancy, and housing tenure, are strong indicators for how well a specific community is doing in providing adequate housing as compared to other communities. The following overview presents these indicators to give a clearer understanding of housing in Chaves County.

HOUSEHOLD TYPE

The U.S. Census Bureau defines a household as all the people residing within a housing unit, regardless of their familial relationships. As of 2023, the total number of households in Chaves County was 23,605, fewer than the number of housing units. This difference may indicate that Chaves County households may be unable to afford separate housing and have chosen shared living arrangements, which indicate a housing shortage as the demand for housing exceeds the supply.

As shown in Table 7.3, between 2013 and 2023, the total number of households slightly increased by 0.5%, from 23,499 to 23,605. In 2023, family households comprised 65.2% of all households, a decrease of 5.0% from 2013. The largest increase in households was amongst Female householders, no spouse present, at 27.6%, but still represented only 6.7% of all households.

Householders living alone represented 29.7% of non-family households in 2023. Of those households, 14.1% were 65 years and older, an increase of 27.3% from 2013.

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TABLE 7.3: HOUSEHOLDS TYPE			
	2013	2023	% Change
Total households	23,499	23,605	0.5%
Family households	69.0%	65.2%	-5.0%
With children of the householder under 18 years	31.7%	29.5%	-6.6%
Married-couple household	48.3%	41.4%	-13.9%
With children of the householder under 18 years	19.7%	17.3%	-12.0%
Female householder, no spouse/partner present	5.3%	6.7%	27.6%
With children of the householder under 18 years	2.9%	3.4%	16.0%
Male householder, no spouse/partner present	15.4%	17.1%	11.6%
With children of the householder under 18 years	9.0%	8.8%	-2.1%
Non-family household	31.0%	34.8%	12.7%
Householder living alone	26.7%	29.7%	11.7%
65 years and over	11.1%	14.1%	27.3%
Average household size	2.70	2.62	-3.0%
Average family size	3.38	3.24	-4.1%

Source: ACS 5-year Estimates, 2013 & 2023.

*Percent change based on whole numbers.

This is similar to the pattern in New Mexico, where 32.1% of householders were living alone and 13.8% of those householders were 65 years and older in 2023.

HOUSING OCCUPANCY

Vacancy rates measure the share of total housing units that are unoccupied and actively available for sale or rent. In a balanced housing market, homeowner vacancy rates typically range from about 1.5% to 2%, indicating steady demand without excessive shortages. For rental markets, balance is generally reflected by vacancy rates of approximately 5% to 6%, which allows tenants' choice while still supporting stable rents.

In 2023, of the 26,794 total housing units in Chaves County, 88.1% were occupied and 11.9% were vacant *(see Table 7.3).* Between 2013 and 2023, occupied housing units rose by 106 units, a 0.5% increase, while total vacant units rose by 40 units, a 1.3% increase.

Between 2013 and 2023, the homeowner vacancy rate in Chaves County decreased by 59.1%, declining from 2.2% to 0.9%, and the rental vacancy rate decreased by 14.3%, from 7.0% to 6.0%. For comparison, New Mexico reported similar vacancy rates in 2023, with a homeowner vacancy rate of 1.1% and a rental vacancy rate of 6.1%.

HOUSING TENURE

Housing tenure refers to the right under which someone may occupy a housing unit, whether it be by ownership or as a renter. In 2023, owner-occupied housing units represented 68.7% of the total 23,605 occupied housing units in Chaves County. Renter-occupied units comprised 31.3% *(see Table 7.5).* Between 2013 and 2023, owner-occupied units grew by 3.8%, whereas renter-occupied decreased by 6.2%. The decline in renter-occupied units suggests more people are choosing to own rather than rent.

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Between 2013 and 2023, the average household size for owner-occupied units remained steady at 2.71. The average size for renter-occupied units decreased by 10.3%, from 2.61 to 2.34.

TABLE 7.4: HOUSING OCCUPANCY

	2013		2023		% Change
Total Units	26,648	100%	26,794	100%	0.5%
Occupied housing units	23,499	88.2%	23,605	88.1%	0.5%
Vacant housing units	3,149	11.8%	3.189	11.9%	1.3%
Homeowner vacancy rate	586	2.2%	240	0.9%	-59.1%
Rental vacancy rate	1,865	7.0%	1,599	6.0%	-14.3%

Source: ACS 5-year Estimates, 2013 & 2023.

*Percent change based on whole numbers.

TABLE 7.5: HOUSING TENURE

	2013	2023	% Change
Occupied housing units	23,499	23,605	0.5%
Owner-occupied	66.5%	68.7%	3.8%
Renter-occupied	33.5%	31.3%	-6.6%
Average household size of owner-occupied unit	2.74	2.71	-1.1%
Average household size of renter-occupied unit	2.61	2.43	-6.9%

Source: ACS 5-year Estimates, 2013 & 2023.

*Percent change based on whole numbers.



Large lot for sale outside of Dexter.

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7.4 HOUSING COSTS & AFFORDABILITY

Understanding housing costs is critical in evaluating housing affordability, economic health, and the overall well-being of Chaves County residents. Affordable housing was identified by the Community Survey respondents as being the type most needed in Chaves County and a strong factor limiting growth in the County.

In 2023, 29.2% of renter-occupied housing units paid between $500 and $799 per month, and 20.5% paid between $1,000 and $1,499 per month *(see Figure 3)*. Median housing costs grew by 28.5%, from $652 to $838. For owner-occupied households, the largest portion had monthly housing costs between $500 and $799, representing 23.5% of total owner-occupied housing units, followed by costs between $300 and $499 at 20.9%. Median owner-occupied housing costs per month were $660, a 15.0% increase from 2013.

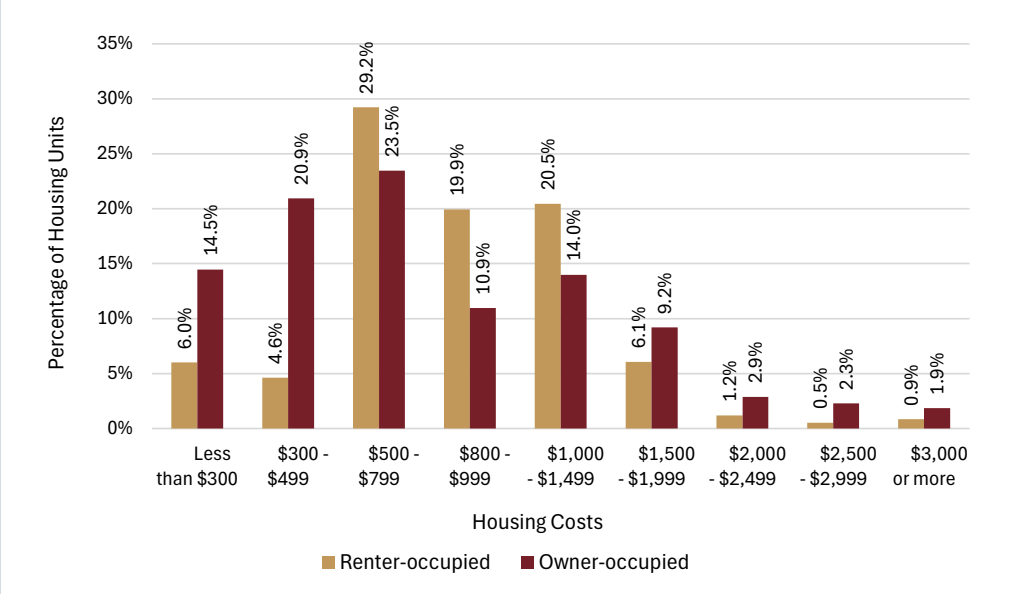
COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

Affordable housing is a fundamental need in every community. Determining the need for affordable housing is tied to the poverty level in the community and the housing supply *(see Chapter 2: Community Profile for poverty rates in Chaves County).* Housing costs are typically the largest monthly expenses for most households. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) considers a household "cost-burdened" when 30% or more of the monthly gross income is dedicated to housing costs. Households with 50% of their monthly gross income dedicated to housing costs are considered "severely cost-burdened". Cost-burdened households have less to spend on other necessities such as groceries, healthcare, and transportation, which can in turn lead to increased stress levels and emotional strain.

In 2023, there were 16,214 owner-occupied households in Chaves County. Among those households, 20.2% were considered cost-burdened. Of those cost-burdened households, 9.3% were severely cost-burdened *(see Figure 7.4).* This reflects increases of 30.6% for cost-burdened households and 44.4% for severely cost-burdened households from 2013. Additionally, among the cost-burdened households, the proportion of those that were severely cost-burdened rose from 41.6% to 46.0%. Owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage were more likely to be cost-burdened in 2023 at 27.7%, compared to only 14.3% of those without a mortgage.

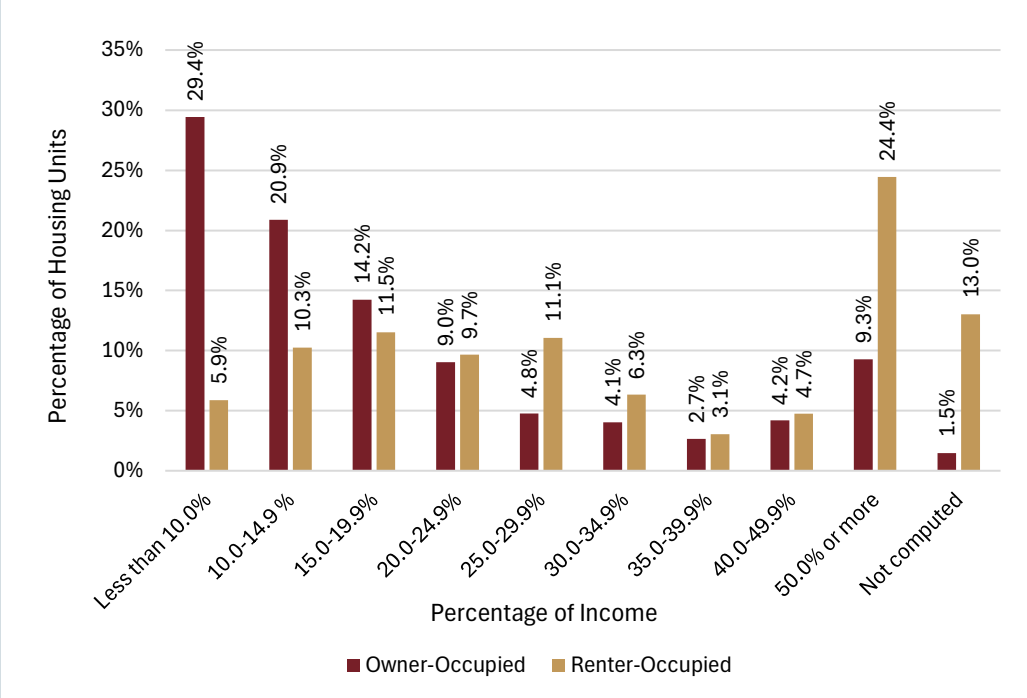
Renter-occupied households generally experience a higher rate of cost-burden compared to owner-occupied households. In 2023, 38.6% of renter households were considered cost-burdened, and among those, 24.4% were severely cost-burdened. Since 2013, the percentage of cost-burdened renter-occupied households has decreased by 13.2%. This decline may reflect stagnant rental prices coupled with rising wages.

FIGURE 7.3: HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN CHAVES COUNTRY



Source: ACS, 5-year Estimates, 2023.

FIGURE 7.4: PERCENTAGE OF HOUSING COSTS TO INCOME



Source: ACS, 5-year Estimates, 2023.

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7.5 STATEWIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY

HOUSING NEW MEXICO

Housing New Mexico (formerly named New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority) is a quasi-governmental entity responsible for the enforcement of New Mexico's Affordable Housing Act and making affordable housing and related services accessible to low-and moderate-income New Mexicans. Using funding from housing bonds, tax credits, and other federal and state agencies, Housing NM provides resources to build affordable rental communities, rehabilitate aging homes, supply down payment assistance and affordable mortgages, emergency shelter, and administer rental assistance and subsidies.

Housing NM partners with lenders, realtors, non-profit organizations, local governments, tribal communities, and developers throughout the state to make these programs and services available to all eligible New Mexicans *(see Appendix C for more information on housing funding sources from Housing New Mexico).*

NEW MEXICO AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT

The *New Mexico Affordable Housing Act* (6-27-1 to 6-27-8 NMSA 1978), enacted by the New Mexico State Legislature in 2004 and amended in 2015, serves as a critical legislative tool enabling local governments and political subdivisions to address housing affordability challenges. By creating an exception to the state's constitutional anti-donation clause, the Act authorizes public entities to allocate resources toward acquisition, development, financing, maintenance, and operation of affordable housing. This legislation facilitates public-private partnerships, empowering municipalities, counties, school districts, and the State of New Mexico to collaborate with qualified housing providers to deliver safe, quality housing to low- and moderate-income residents.

Affordable Housing Plan and Ordinance Requirements

To utilize the provisions of the *Affordable Housing Act,* a public entity is required to develop and adopt an affordable housing plan and an affordable housing ordinance. An affordable housing plan identifies existing and future housing needs within the local area, and must follow Housing New Mexico requirements, which include a community and household profile; a housing needs assessment; land use and policy review; and goals, policies, and quantifiable objectives that identify the types and quantities of housing units needed by income range currently and in the future.

An affordable housing ordinance is required to establish the eligibility of grantees, identify application processes, and the requirements for the development of various housing types. Housing New Mexico provides technical assistance to communities seeking to create an affordable housing plan and ordinance.

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7.6 HOUSING RESOURCES

Housing programs and services in Chaves County are provided through non-profit and government programs. Roswell, being the largest municipality in Chaves County, is where most of the housing resources reside. The following is an overview of the housing resources available to Chaves County residents.

EASTERN REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY VI

The Eastern Regional Housing Authority is funded by the U.S. Department Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and located in Roswell. It covers 12 counties in New Mexico, including Chaves, Eddy, De Baca, Guadalupe, Harding, Lea, Lincoln, Otero, Quay, Roosevelt, Union, and Curry counties. The Eastern Regional Housing Authority was established to provide decent and safe rental public housing for eligible low-income families, the elderly, and persons with disabilities and manages Section 8 housing vouchers or Housing Choice Vouchers, which helps low-income families and individuals by paying a portion of their rent directly to landlords. Waiting lists to obtain Housing Choice Vouchers in New Mexico are lengthy, averaging up to 1.5 years or more.

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.

SOUTHEAST NEW MEXICO COMMUNITY ACTION CORPORATION

The Southeast New Mexico Community Action Corporation (SNMCAC) provides assistance with rent/mortgage and utilities for applicants in Chaves, Lincoln, and Lea counties who meet income guidelines and provides the required documentation. The main SNMCAC office is located in Carlsbad and the senior citizens program, adult respite, and the foster grandparent program are located in Carlsbad and Artesia. Community services locations are in Roswell, Carlsbad, Artesia, and Alamogordo.

ALIANZA OF NEW MEXICO

This organization is located in Roswell and provides housing assistance, counseling, and case management for people affected by HIV/AIDS.

PEOPLE CARE, INC.

People Care, Inc. is an organization that provides housing and care for young adults diagnosed with mental illness. The organization operates group homes in Roswell and contributes to the development of housing for people with disabilities.

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ROSWELL HOMELESS COALITION

The Roswell Homeless Coalition operates two homeless shelters that provide temporary housing to men, women, and children in need and a thrift store. The women's shelter includes eight beds and two family rooms and the men's shelter has 16 beds. The Roswell Homeless Coalition is funded through donations from local churches, businesses, individuals, and thrift store sales. Funding has also come from the annual United Way of Chaves County campaigns.

ROSWELL REFUGE

Roswell Refuge is a non-profit organization that provides emergency shelter for individuals and families affected by domestic violence. Chaves County has worked with many of the organizations cited above by applying for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and other forms of assistance. The City of Roswell has been successful in securing CDBG funds that offer assistance for repairs and upgrades to streets and infrastructure in areas that are in severe need of financial assistance.

7.7 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

HOUSING GOAL 1

Promote equal access to a diverse range of safe and affordable housing types.

Objectives:

- *Objective 1.a: To meet the basic housing needs of Chaves County residents.*
- *Objective 1.b: To support the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing in Chaves County.*
- *Objective 1.c: To expand workforce housing opportunities, particularly for those workers employed in education, health care, law enforcement, and corrections.*
- *Objective 1.d: To accommodate the housing needs of single parent households, people with disabilities, veterans, elderly, and other special populations.*
- *Objective 1.e: To ensure that local non-profit and private housing assistance organizations have adequate funding.*
- *Objective 1.f: To ensure that Chaves County has access to all funding sources available to local and county governments for all types of housing assistance.*

HOUSING ACTION 1.1

Chaves County shall create an Affordable Housing Plan that complies with the New Mexico Affordable Housing Act, as amended. The Affordable Housing Plan shall be accompanied by an Affordable Housing Ordinance, as required by the Act. Consider including the towns of Hagerman, Dexter, and Lake Arthur in this planning effort.

The Affordable Housing Plan shall contain, but not be limited to:

- 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 (zoning and land use development codes), non-regulatory (fees, infrastructure capacity, environmental, land availability, financial), and policy constraints to affordable housing in Chaves County;
- Goals, policies, and quantifiable objectives to meet affordable housing needs (rental and owner-occupied) within a planning horizon of five years; and
- Public input.

HOUSING ACTION 1.2

Chaves County shall support affordable housing organizations by helping to secure grants, advertising, and other in-kind support. Chaves County government will provide support to affordable housing organizations that are involved in workforce housing and housing that addresses the needs of low income and special needs residents through the following:

- Assisting by identifying grant programs and funding sources available to non-profit and private housing assistance groups;
- Coordinating with the Regional Office of the Housing and Urban Development Department to identify all community development grants and funding that can be utilized for providing affordable and low income housing;
- Taking the lead in applying for grants and funding sources and providing these monies to qualified affordable housing organizations; and
- Maintaining partnerships through coordination, agreements, and memorandums of understanding with affordable housing organizations.

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8 TRANSPORTATION

ENSURING A SAFE, EFFICIENT, AND WELL-MAINTAINED TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

A safe, efficient, and well-maintained transportation system is essential in maintaining orderly growth, serving existing and future land uses, and enhance economic development. Continued investment in upgrading, expanding, and maintaining transportation infrastructure is critical to accommodating future development, strengthening regional competitiveness, and ensuring the efficient movement of people, goods, and emergency services.

Chaves County contains a comprehensive transportation system of roads, rail, and air travel modes. The roadway system includes US highways, state highways, county roads, and local streets that shape development patterns and provide critical connections between residential areas, employment centers, commercial districts, and agriculture and industrial land. The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad provides freight rail transportation that runs north and south through Chaves County. The Roswell Air Center (RAC) is located at the far south end of South Main Street in Roswell.

One of the primary roles of all counties, and Chaves County is no exception, is to maintain roadways to ensure the safe travel of drivers. The participants in the Community Survey expressed strong concern regarding the current roadway conditions and maintenance, particularly regarding the need to fill potholes, road resurfacing, and the lack of shoulders.

8.2 COUNTY ROADS

Chaves County owns and maintains 1,440 miles of road, of which only 469 miles are chip-sealed or paved. The remaining 971 miles of Chaves County roads are surfaced with gravel, caliche, or dirt. Chaves County owns chip-seal equipment, trucks, motor graders, and rollers, and the County Road Department provides in-house roadway maintenance and road construction.

Construction and maintenance for Chaves County roads are funded through local and state sources. This includes road projects within the ETZ. Chaves County requires developers to build roads in new subdivisions that meet County standards before the County accepts them for maintenance.

MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS

Chaves County sets maintenance and repair priorities about three years in advance, prioritizing roads based on condition or new developments that might impact traffic patterns and counts. Surfaced roads are scheduled for maintenance every seven to 10 years. For the most part, they are resurfaced by recycling the original surface material and sealed with a double penetration chip seal.

Road repairs are added to the priority list when County staff reports an issue, or a resident submits an online complaint form. After the road is repaired, ideally within three years, County staff updates the database of road repairs, noting that the road was fixed and is not scheduled for maintenance for seven to 10 years.

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ROAD MAP CHANGES

Chaves County maintains a map of all roads in the County, referred to as the *Road Map.* The County maintained the *Road Map* as a physical map until 2018, when it started transitioning to the current GIS map. Changes to the *Road Map* are made after the annual road hearing process, where roads are added or removed from Chaves County's inventory. Typically, six to 10 items are heard on this agenda annually where applicants may:

- Apply to add a road to the County's inventory;
- Vacate a road on the County's inventory; or
- Change the status of a non-County maintained road in public right-of-way, a situation that arises when right-of-way was previously accepted by Chaves County before the road was developed to County standards, and an applicant has brought the road into compliance.

New roads are also added to the *Road Map* through the subdivision process, which does not have to occur during the annual road hearing process.

TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

As a rural county with many miles of road to maintain, Chaves County is frequently challenged to fully fund every necessary road improvement and repair. When a natural disaster occurs, such as the severe flooding on October 19, 2024, it can stretch already thin resources as disaster relief funding can be complex to obtain. Below is a summary of issues that have been identified by the Steering Committee, community members, or through previous planning efforts:

- The *2016 Comprehensive Plan* identified intersection improvements as a high priority for Chaves County residents.
- Drainage was also a concern in 2016, and this issue has risen to a high priority due to the recent flooding, which impacted bridges and low water crossings throughout Chaves County. Pine Lodge Road and Red Bridge Road have functioned as a northeast bypass around Roswell for over a decade, seeing traffic counts as high as 3,772 average daily trips compared to intersecting local roads experiencing closer to 200 daily trips. This issue has been identified for many years by SERTPO and Chaves County. Prior to 2007, Chaves County was considering the feasibility of an eastside bypass road but ultimately did not pursue the project.
- During the subdivision process, public right-of-way is sometimes accepted before the roads are built to County standards, which complicates maintenance and causes additional administrative work for County staff to ensure the work is complete before lots are sold.

LOCAL STREETS

Chaves County roads tie into the local streets within Roswell, Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur. The City of Roswell maintains over 364 miles of paved streets within its municipal limits. Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur also own and maintain their local street systems.

8.3 HIGHWAYS IN CHAVES COUNTY

US HIGHWAYS

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) maintains approximately 560 miles of roads within Chaves County, including US Highways 70, 380, and 285, which bring the largest number of vehicles through Roswell and Chaves County.

US 285

US 285 runs north-south through Chaves County. It is a four-lane divided highway from Interstate 40 in the north to Carlsbad in the south. A multi-year process is underway to widen US 285 to four lanes all the way to Interstate 10 at Fort Stockton, Texas. When completed, this will establish US 285 as a major north/south corridor through New Mexico and contribute to economic development throughout southeast New Mexico. Widening was completed in New Mexico to the Texas border in 2020, and, according to the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT), environmental studies have begun for the first phase of improvements from the New Mexico border to Pecos, Texas. Full improvements to complete the connection to Fort Stockton are still planned for the future.

The bridge on south 285 over Rio Feliz, south of Roswell, was damaged in the 2024 flood. Now there is a "shoofly" detour around the bridge, and the 14,000 commuters a day heading south of Roswell are diverted onto local roads. The bridge project is underway with planning set to complete in December 2025, and construction to start in January 2026.

US 70

US 70 runs east-west through Chaves County. It is a major east-west truck route through New Mexico, connecting southern Arizona to Amarillo, Texas, via Las Cruces and Roswell. This route is particularly important during the winter months, when northern roads are prone to bad weather. US 70 has a non-interstate Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) designation , serving the US Armed Forces for the movement of personnel and equipment, and it also contributes to economic development throughout southeast New Mexico.



Southbound 285 towards Roswell.

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US 70/285/Roswell Relief Route

The Roswell Relief Route is a 15-mile segment of road that loops around Roswell to the west to provide truck relief for US 285 and US 70, both of which travel through the center of Roswell. It is officially designated as a segment of US 70 West and US 285 South.

US 380

US 380 runs east-west through New Mexico, from Interstate 25 south of Socorro to the west into Texas. A section of US 380 runs concurrently with US 70 from Hondo to Roswell. US 380 runs through Tatum, and provides the route most often taken to Lubbock, Midland/Odessa, and Dallas, TX. Significant facilities along this route, such as the Triassic Park Waste Disposal Facility, approximately 43 miles east of Roswell, contribute to high traffic volumes. For many years, NMDOT has pursued widening US 380 from Roswell to the Texas border, but has been unable to secure funding for this project. As a cost-effective alternative, NMDOT secured funding and began adding passing lanes east of Roswell in early 2025.

US 82

US 82 is a two-lane highway that runs from Alamogordo east through the Lincoln National Forest to Artesia through the southern part of Chaves County. It is commonly known as Rio Peñasco Road, as it follows its namesake river through rural Chaves County and continues through Eddy and Lea counties and into Texas.

STATE HIGHWAYS

State highways play a critical role in the Chaves County transportation system by providing regional and connectivity between communities, supporting agricultural and industrial activity, and linking local road networks to the overall state and national transportation system. These roadways are maintained by the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), primarily through District 2, which serves Roswell and the surrounding area.

NM 2

NM 2 is a north-south highway that parallels U.S. Highway 285 and serves the communities of Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur, while also accommodating the dairy and farming industry. NM 2 is an alternative to US 285 for local traffic and commuters traveling between Roswell and Artesia and the greater Pecos Valley. It is one of the most highly traveled state highways in Chaves County.

NM 13

NM 13 runs east–west through the central and southeast areas of Chaves County, connecting US 285 near Roswell to areas east of the County. This highway primarily serves rural and agricultural areas and supports access to oil and gas development, ranching operations, and dispersed residential uses. NM 13 plays a key role in facilitating freight and service vehicle travel in rural parts of Chaves County.

NM 18

NM 18 provides north–south connectivity in eastern Chaves County, linking rural communities, agricultural lands, and industrial activities to the broader state highway network. It supports movement between Chaves County and neighboring counties, particularly for energy-related traffic and long-distance market

transportation. NM 18 is especially important for supporting regional economic activity tied to natural resource development in the oil and gas industry.

NM 249

NM 249 is a shorter state highway that connects local communities and rural areas to NM 2 and US 285. It serves as a local access route supporting agricultural areas, residential neighborhoods, and small-scale commercial activity. NM 249 enhances connectivity within the northwestern portion of Chaves County and provides important links for school transportation and emergency access.

NM 256

NM 256 functions as a connector route in eastern Chaves County, providing access between NM 2, US 285, and surrounding rural areas. The roadway supports local circulation, agricultural traffic, and access to undeveloped lands. NM 256 contributes to the overall redundancy and resiliency of Chaves County's roadway network by offering alternate travel routes.

8.4 FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

The functional classification system for Chaves County is defined by the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT). It classifies the roadways by the type and the level of service provided. The functional classification of roadways is informed by roadway design, intended travel speeds, vehicle volumes, and the relationship to existing and future land uses. Functional classification helps guide transportation planning, roadway design standards, access management, and future investment decisions by matching roadway characteristics to intended use. Roadway facilities are classified as Principal Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, and Minor Collector.

PRINCIPAL ARTERIALS

Principal arterials are the highest-capacity roadways shown on the map. These routes accommodate high traffic volumes and longer-distance travel, and they provide regional and statewide connectivity. In Chaves County, principal arterials include US 285, US 70, US 380, and US 82, which link Roswell to surrounding counties and regional centers. These roadways prioritize efficient mobility over direct property access and are critical for freight movement, regional travel, emergency response, and economic connectivity between communities.

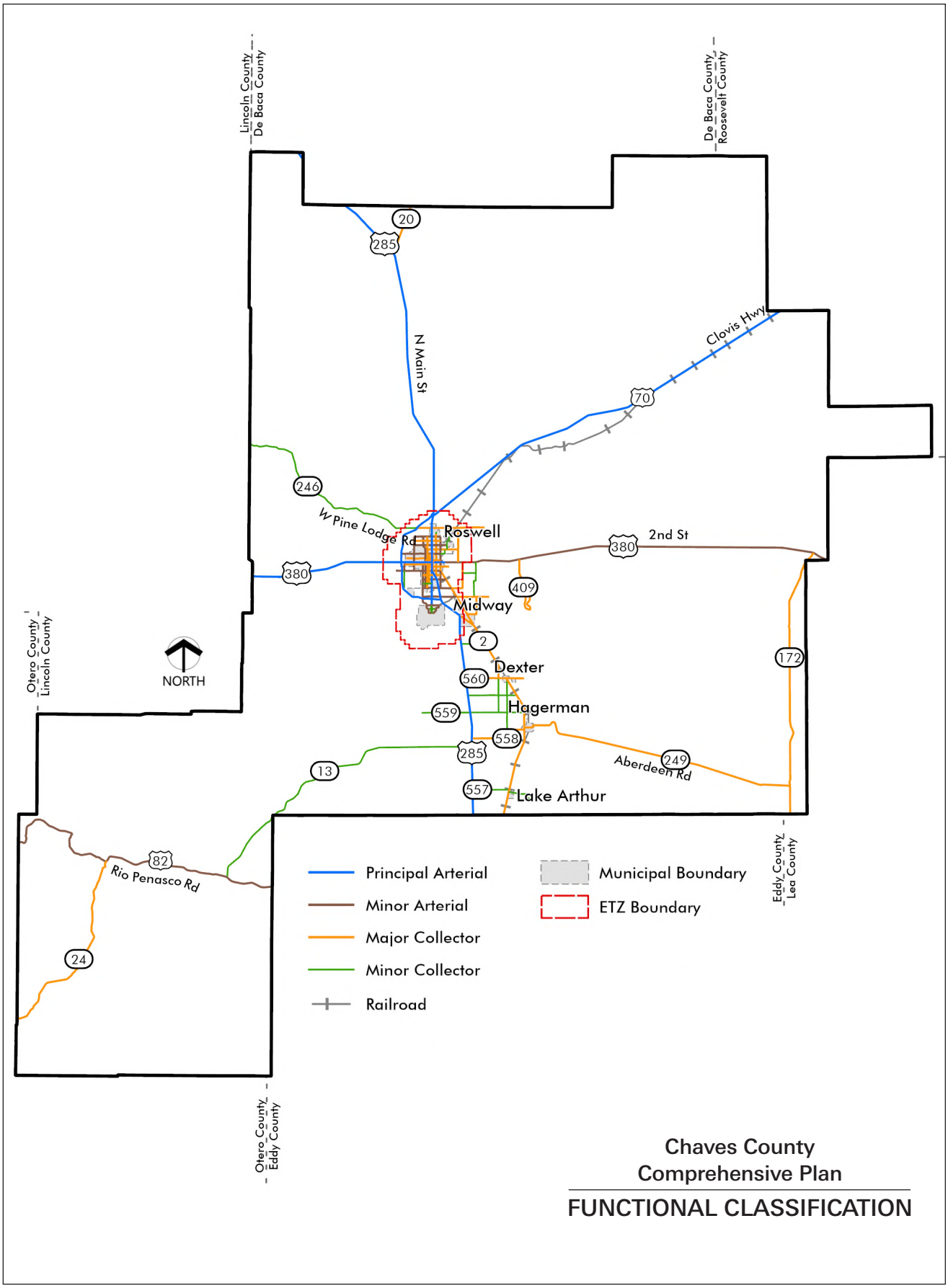
MINOR ARTERIALS

Minor arterials serve as connectors between principal arterials and the local roadway network. These roads typically carry moderate traffic volumes and provide important links between different parts of Chaves County, including urban areas, rural communities, and major employment or commercial areas. Minor arterials help distribute traffic from the principal highways into Roswell and other activity centers while maintaining relatively continuous traffic flow.

MAJOR COLLECTORS

Major collectors connect neighborhoods, rural areas, and smaller communities to the arterial system. These roadways balance mobility and access by gathering

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Lincoln County
De Baca County
De Baca County
Roosevelt County
20
285
N Main St
Clovis Hwy
70
246
W Pine Lodge Rd
Roswell
380
2nd St
380
409
Midway
2
Dexter
560
559
Hagerman
558
285
13
557
Lake Arthur
Aberdeen Rd
249
172
Otero County
Lincoln County
NORTH
82
Rio Penasco Rd
24
Otero County
Eddy County
Eddy County
Lea County
Principal Arterial
Minor Arterial
Major Collector
Minor Collector
Railroad
Municipal Boundary
ETZ Boundary
Chaves County
Comprehensive Plan
FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION

traffic from local roads and channeling it toward arterials. In Chaves County, major collectors often serve agricultural and rural residential areas, provide access to schools and community facilities, local businesses, and agricultural and service vehicle traffic.

MINOR COLLECTORS

Minor collectors provide connectivity for shorter trips and lower traffic volumes than major collectors. They typically connect local streets and rural roads to major collectors or arterials. These roads are important in rural areas of Chaves County and access needs are more localized.

RAILROAD CORRIDORS

Railroad corridors are shown on the map to provide context for freight movement in Chaves County. Rail lines play an important role in regional goods movement and economic activity, particularly for industrial and agricultural uses.

8.5 TRAFFIC & SAFETY

TRAFFIC COUNTS

According to NMDOT's 2024 traffic data, US 285 is the highest volume roadway in Chaves County, with average daily traffic counts reaching nearly 25,000 in the heart of Roswell as it passes NMMI. This segment also overlaps with US 70. Outside of Roswell, traffic is relatively low volume on all roads. The highest traffic count outside of Roswell is on US 285 southbound towards Artesia, with about 8,800 average daily trips. US 70, US 380, and US 82 do not exceed 4,000 average daily trips anywhere within unincorporated Chaves County. Old Dexter Highway reaches almost 4,000 average daily trips north of Dexter and drops as low as 1,512 average daily trips north of Lake Arthur.

Several local roads in Roswell exceed 5,000 average daily trips, primarily at or near NMMI, with the highest volume local road, N. Union Avenue, reaching 10,704 trips. Other high-volume local roads include E College Boulevard, N Garden Avenue, and N Atkinson Avenue.

Crash Data

According to the 2023 Chaves County Community Report, total annual crashes have generally declined since 2015, from 1,383 in 2015 to 1,175 in 2023. Between six and 13 crashes per year have been fatal, with yearly fluctuations and no significant upward or downward trend. Up to 78 of the total crashes during this time frame have been alcohol involved, with 58 alcohol-involved crashes in 2023. Most crashes tend to occur during morning and evening commutes, but alcohol crashes spike around 6:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m., and 1:00 a.m.

Heavy truck crashes have nearly as high an incidence as alcohol-related crashes. The 2019-2023 average annual number of truck crashes was 58, compared to 68 for alcohol-related crashes. Pedestrian and cyclist crashes were much lower, averaging 23 per year.

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8.6 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

SNMEDD REGIONAL LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District (SNMEDD) is the regional Council of Governments that coordinates long-range transportation planning through the Southeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SERTPO). SERTPO prepares a *Regional Long Range Transportation Plan* (RLRTP) that provides preliminary regional transportation goals, needs, issues, and possible solutions over a 20-year period, derived from local elected and/or appointed officials. The most recent RLRTP was adopted in 2022, and the plan is updated at least every five years. The regional goals of the SERTPO include:

Goal 1: Continue to build local participation and foster regional partnerships.

- Encourage additional transportation stakeholder participation.
- Develop transportation-related data within RTPO's resources and make the information available online.

Goal 2: Improve safety and public health for all system users.

- Coordinate emergency management planning with SERTPO planning processes.
- Identify safety corridors and gaps that need safety improvements and encourage funding applications to cover those gaps.
- Encourage funding application for bus stop/shelter improvements.
- Channel safety campaigns to include safety training and awareness for the general public.
- Encourage local traffic enforcement training.
- Encourage the SERTPO Committee to give higher ranking for multimodal options.
- Encourage application and participation with multimodal and trail programs.
- Support Prescription Trails (DOH) by encouraging communities to develop prescription trails-share information and/or provide links.
- Pursue SERTPO development of programs, within its resources, for the collection, management, and sharing of traffic data.

Goal 3: Preserve and maintain our transportation for the long term.

- Encourage rail stakeholders to participate with SERTPO planning processes.
- Encourage application to roadway infrastructure funding (state and federal) to members.
- Provide and promote roadway and safety training within the region for all modes of transportation.
- Continue strong coordination between local governments and the NMDOT District office through SERTPO meetings.
- Assist local governments in their asset management planning.

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Goal 4: Provide multi-modal access and connectivity for community prosperity and health.

- Support transit stakeholders in their pursuit of establishing RTD(s).
- Keep members informed on ADA compliance.
- Refer/share information with local governments on NMDOT permitting information.
- Bring awareness to special designations/corridors within the region.

Goal 5: Respect New Mexico's cultures, environment, history, and quality-of-life.

- Promote all Scenic Byways to local governments and the public.
- Pursue any Scenic Byway training.
- Keep members informed of trail funding and training opportunities.
- Provide training.

NEW MEXICO ELECTRIC VEHICLE INFRASTRUCTURE

The *New Mexico Electric Vehicle Deployment Plan* was developed by the NMDOT, approved for eligible funding by the Federal Highway Administration in September 2022, and updated in 2024. The *Electric Vehicle Deployment Plan* provides guidance for electric vehicle infrastructure to create convenient, reliable, affordable, accessible, and equitable charging across an interconnected network with consistent user experience. The NMDOT received funding for the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program through the I*nfrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021*. The program will provide project funding in four phases, prioritizing highways near urban centers and then expanding to rural highways.

Chaves County highways are included in Phases 2 through 4. Phase 2 funding opened in 2024 and Phase 3 funding opened in 2025. These phases include segments of US 285, US 70, and US 380. Chaves County can install EV charging stations along rural highways through the NEVI program, advancing equitable access to EV technology to these areas.

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8.7 OTHER TRANSPORTATION MODES

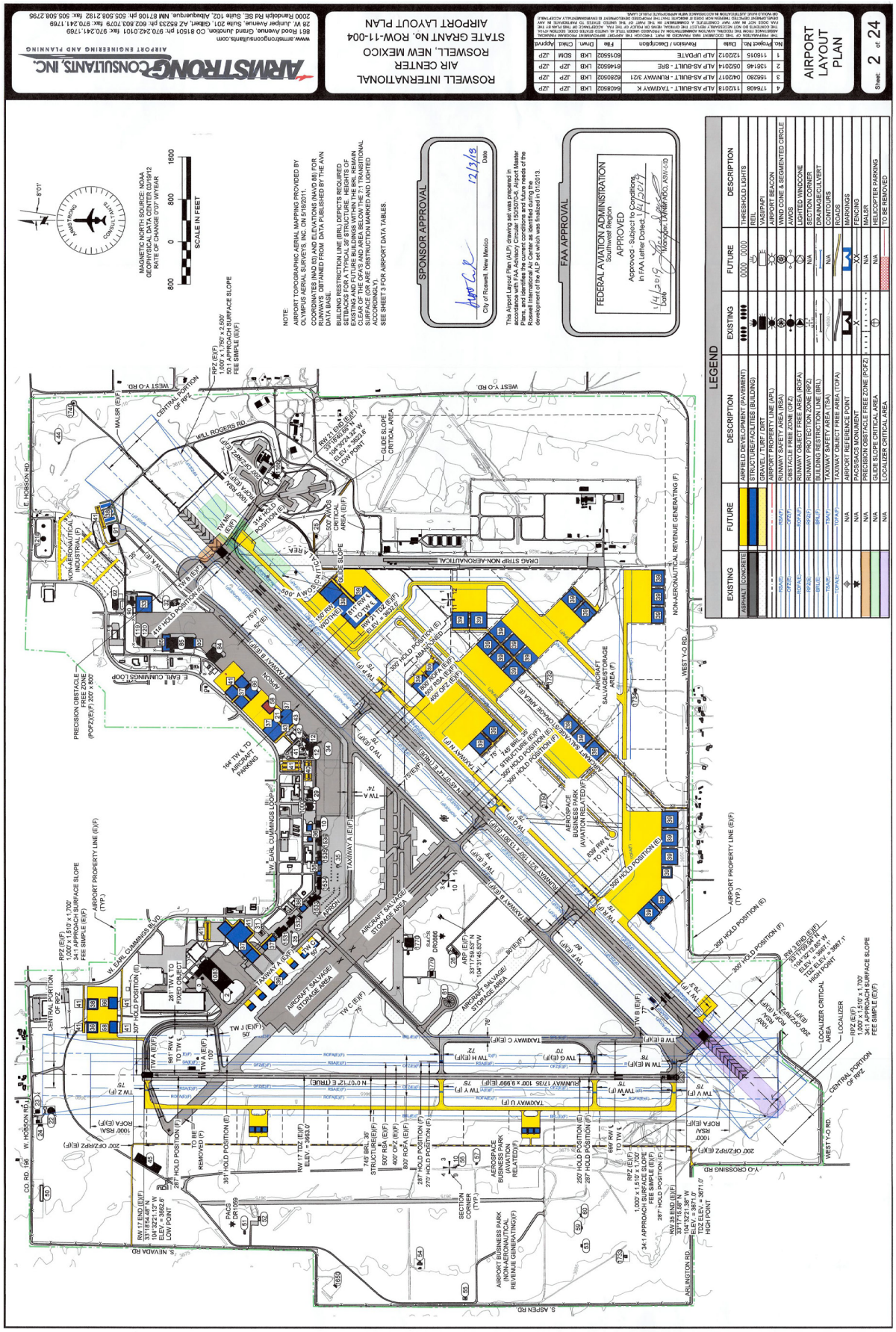
ROSWELL AIR CENTER

The Roswell Air Center (RAC), formerly known as the Roswell International Air Center, provides both passenger and cargo air transportation. The RAC is located on the south end of Roswell at the former site of Walker Air Force Base, which was closed in 1967 and the airfield was transferred to the City of Roswell. The City has operated and maintained the RAC since that time.

The RAC has one of the longest runways in the world, capable of accommodating any size aircraft *(see the Airport Layout Plan, page 151)*. Commercial passenger service is currently being provided by American Airlines with small commuter planes that travel to and from Dallas / Fort Worth, Texas. All branches of the military use the RAC for training exercises, and numerous airline companies train their pilots there as well. A large number of cargo airlines fly in and out of Roswell daily, supplying goods to the region *(see Chapter 6: Economic Development for more information on the RAC).*



Roswell Air Center Terminal.


ROSWELL INTERNATIONAL AIR CENTER
ROSWELL, NEW MEXICO
STATE GRANT No. ROW-11-004
AIRPORT LAYOUT PLAN
AIRPORT LAYOUT PLAN
Sheet: 2 of 24
ARMSTRONG CONSULTANTS, INC.
AIRPORT ENGINEERING AND PLANNING
SPONSOR APPROVAL
City of Roswell, New Mexico
Date
FAA APPROVAL
FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
Southwest Region
APPROVED
Approved - Subject to Conditions
In FAA Letter Dated:
Date
LEGEND
EXISTING
FUTURE
DESCRIPTION
AIRFIELD DEVELOPMENT (PAVEMENT)
STRUCTURE/FACILITIES (BUILDING)
GRAVEL / TURF / DIRT
AIRPORT PROPERTY LINE (APL)
RUNWAY SAFETY AREA (RSA)
OBSTACLE FREE ZONE (OFZ)
RUNWAY OBJECT FREE AREA (ROFA)
RUNWAY PROTECTION ZONE (RPZ)
BUILDING RESTRICTION LINE (BRL)
TAXIWAY SAFETY AREA (TSA)
TAXIWAY OBJECT FREE AREA (TOFA)
AIRPORT REFERENCE POINT
PACS/SACS MONUMENT
PRECISION OBSTACLE FREE ZONE (POFZ)
GLIDE SLOPE CRITICAL AREA
LOCALIZER CRITICAL AREA
DESCRIPTION
THRESHOLD LIGHTS
RETIL
VASI/PAPI
AIRPORT BEACON
WIND CONE & SEGMENTED CIRCLE
AWOS
LIGHTED WINDCONE
SECTION CORNER
DRAINAGE/CULVERT
CONTOURS
ROADS
BUILDINGS
FENCING
MALSR
HELICOPTER PARKING
TO BE REMOVED
NOTE:
AIRPORT TOPOGRAPHIC AERIAL MAPPING PROVIDED BY AERO-METRIC, INC. DATED 4/5/2013.
COORDINATES (NAD 83) AND ELEVATIONS (NAVD 88) FOR RUNWAYS OBTAINED FROM DATA PUBLISHED BY THE AVN DATA BASE.
BUILDING RESTRICTION LINE (BRL) DEPICTS REQUIRED SETBACKS FROM RUNWAYS AND TAXIWAYS TO PROTECT EXISTING AND FUTURE BUILDINGS WITHIN THE BRL REMAIN CLEAR OF THE OFA'S AND AREA BELOW THE 7:1 TRANSITIONAL SURFACE FOR AIR OBSTRUCTION MARKED AND LIGHTED ACCORDINGLY.
SEE SHEET 3 FOR AIRPORT DATA TABLES.
MAGNETIC NORTH SOURCE: NOAA GEOPHYSICAL DATA CENTER (03/19/12 RATE OF CHANGE: 0.07° W/YEAR)
SCALE IN FEET
0 800 1600
800
ARMSTRONG CONSULTANTS, INC.
2000 Randolph Rd SE, Suite 102, Albuquerque, NM 87106 ph: 505.508.2182 fax: 505.508.2796
28 W. Juniper Avenue, Suite 201, Gilbert, AZ 85233 ph: 602.803.7079 fax: 970.241.1769
861 Flood Avenue, Grand Junction, CO 81501 ph: 970.242.0101 fax: 970.241.1769
www.armstrongconsultants.com

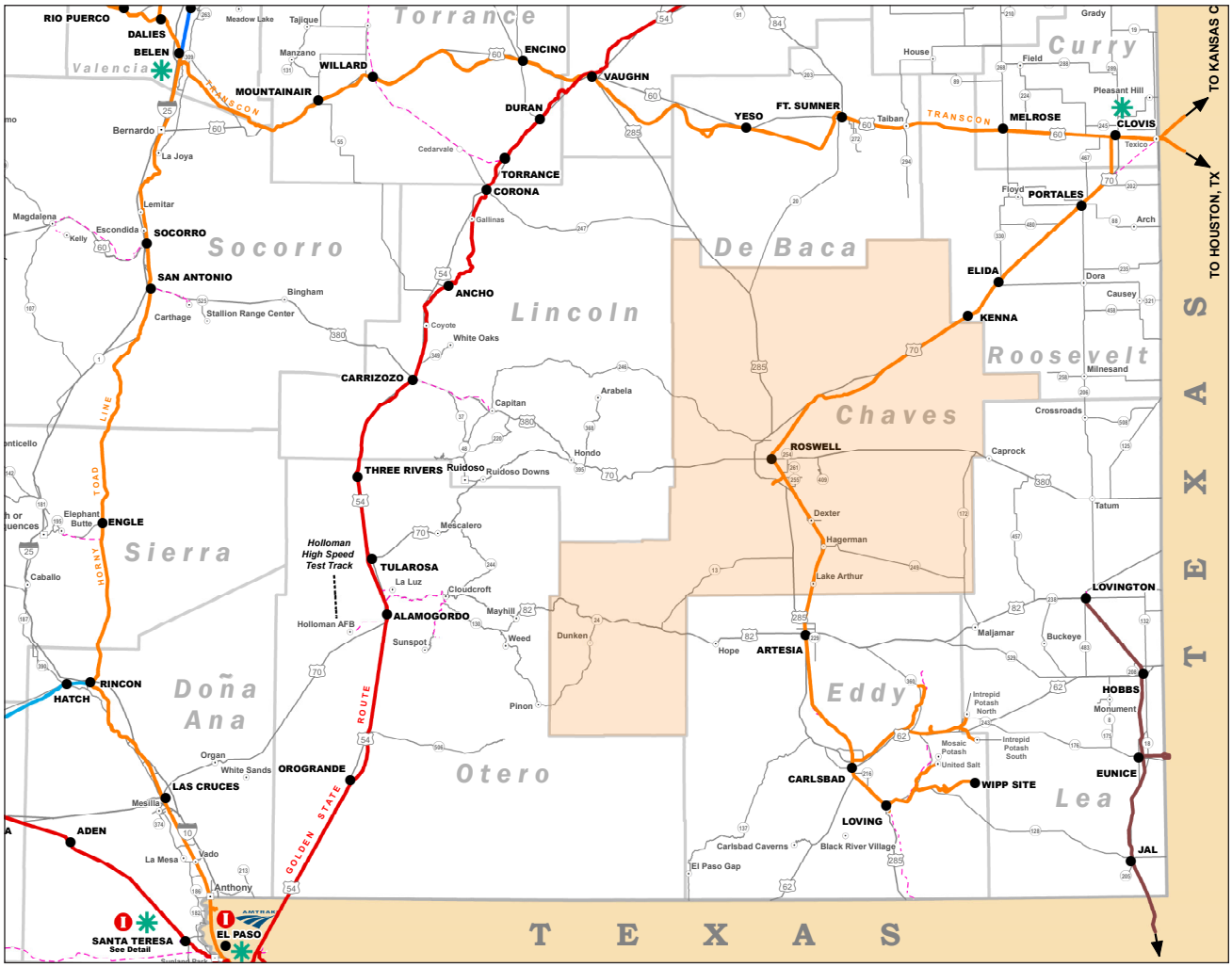
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RAILWAYS

The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) operates freight rail line through Chaves County as part of the Carlsbad Subdivision, which runs approximately 183 miles between Clovis and Carlsbad in southeast New Mexico *(see Railroads in Southeast New Mexico map below)*. The Roswell line supports only freight operations, serving the agricultural, industrial, mineral, and bulk commodities. The Carlsbad Subdivision line is considered a minor rail hub that provides critical access for local businesses and connects Chaves County to the larger state and national BNSF rail networks. Service on this line is typically provided by local or short-haul trains, rather than long distance, high frequency mainline traffic.

The BNSF maintains all rail infrastructure within Chaves County, including track, crossings, signal systems, and federally-licensed communications infrastructure to support railroad operations and dispatch functions. In 2024, severe flooding caused track washout near the Pecos River near Roswell, shutting down the Carlsbad Subdivision for several days before service was restored.

RAILROADS IN SOUTHEAST NEW MEXICO



Source: NMDOT Rail Bureau.

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8.8 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 1

Increase roadway safety by eliminating substandard road conditions and intersections.

Objectives:

- *Objective 1.a: To ensure that Chaves County's road system is efficiently maintained and safe for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.*
- *Objective 1.b: To alleviate traffic on NM 2 by widening and improving connector roads from the valley communities to US 285.*
- *Objective 1.c: To ensure roadways are developed, extended, and/or improved to meet adopted functional classification standards.*
- *Objective 1.d: To ensure roads and bridges damaged during the 2024 flood event are repaired.*

TRANSPORTATION ACTION 1.1

Chaves County shall work with the SERTPO and the regional priorities to improve connector roads from NM 2 to US 285. As part of this effort, Chaves County shall identify and utilize available funding sources for these road improvements.

TRANSPORTATION ACTION 1.2

Chaves County shall re-evaluate intersections and conditions on County roads and take necessary steps to mitigate noted deficiencies.

TRANSPORTATION ACTION 1.3

Chaves County Road Department shall develop a Traffic Management Plan for County roads in the Pecos Valley, addressing:

- Daily traffic counts;
- Techniques to mitigate traffic congestion on County roads and NM 2 and NM 256;
- Areas where new rights-of-way need to be acquired;
- Additional or modified traffic control; and
- Additional traffic routes.

TRANSPORTATION ACTION 1.4

Develop and maintain a preventative roadway maintenance plan to ensure County roads are adequately maintained and to increase the lifespan of asphalt paving through regular crack sealing, seal coating, patching, hot mixed asphalt over cold milling, etc.

TRANSPORTATION ACTION 1.5

Chaves County shall continue to work with FEMA and the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to identify mitigation and improvement efforts related to the transportation network and to secure adequate funding for these efforts.

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TRANSPORTATION GOAL 2

Chaves County's road system will accommodate and be compatible with existing and future land uses and development.

Objectives:

- *Objective 2.a: To ensure access to new developments is provided through new connector roads or upgrades to existing connector roads.*
- *Objective 2.b: To support and plan for transportation improvements for economic development purposes.*
- *Objective 2.c: To ensure adequate right-of-way for future roadway and intersection expansion.*

TRANSPORTATION ACTION 2.1

Chaves County shall acquire new rights-of-way in order to complete roadway expansion and improvements, where necessary.

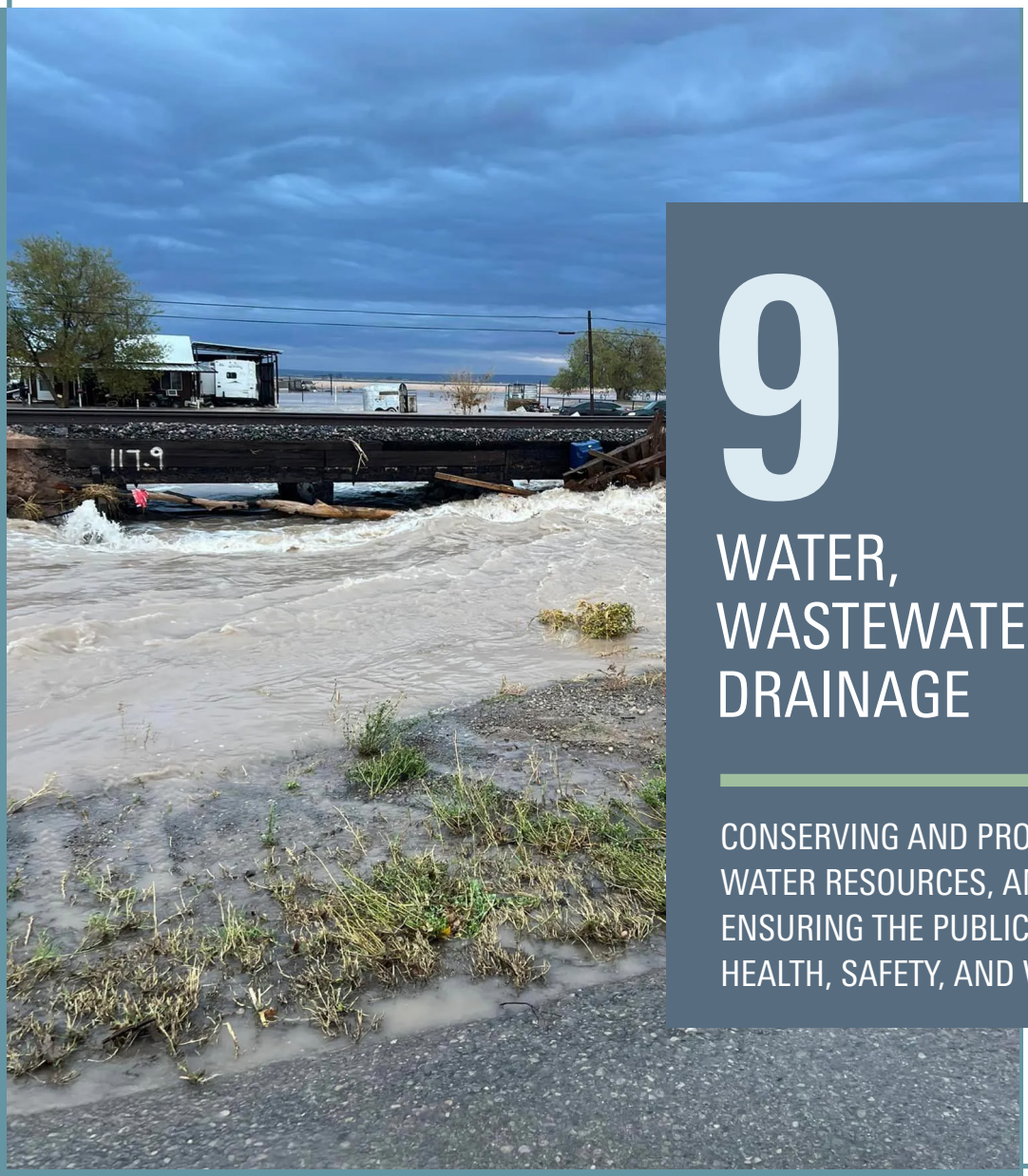
TRANSPORTATION ACTION 2.2

Chaves County shall require adequate right-of-way dedication and improvements necessary to serve proposed development.

TRANSPORTATION ACTION 2.3

In conjunction with Land Use Action 7.1, update the *Chaves County Subdivision Ordinance* to ensure roadway construction is included as a condition of approval for proposed subdivisions.

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9

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE

CONSERVING AND PROTECTING WATER RESOURCES, AND ENSURING THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELFARE

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9.1 INTRODUCTION

Water resources are fundamental to the environmental sustainability, economic stability, and public health of Chaves County. Reliance on groundwater for domestic, agricultural, industrial, and municipal uses, combined with a semi-arid climate, recurring drought, and increasing development pressures, makes careful planning and management of water, wastewater, and drainage systems essential.

The Water, Wastewater, and Drainage element documents the existing conditions, capacity, and utilization of the water supply, wastewater treatment, and storm drainage systems within Chaves County. It also evaluates the current infrastructure, identifies system constraints and vulnerabilities, and examines regulatory, hydrologic, and environmental factors affecting water quantity and quality.

The intent is to provide a comprehensive framework to guide future planning decisions, infrastructure investments, and policy actions that will protect water resources in coordination with local, regional, state, and federal agencies. The goals, objectives, and policy actions set forth in this chapter are intended to promote efficient use of water resources, protect groundwater and surface water, ensure reliable wastewater treatment, and improve resilience to extreme weather and flood events.

9.2 WATER SUPPLY & DISTRIBUTION

Water is the most important resource for any community, and this is especially true for Chaves County, which uses a significant amount for agricultural purposes. Domestic water use is almost insignificant compared to the amount used by farming and dairy operations. The majority of agricultural operations use independent groundwater wells. Domestic water is supplied by individual groundwater wells, water co-ops, and municipal water systems. No potable surface water systems exist in Chaves County.

The Roswell Groundwater Basin is over 4,000 square miles within the lower Pecos Valley in Chaves County and northern Eddy County. The eastern margin of the Roswell Groundwater Basin occurs just east of the Pecos River; the northern boundary is approximately defined by Macho Draw north of Roswell and the southern end of the basin is located at the Seven Rivers Hills north of Carlsbad. The western margin of the Roswell Groundwater Basin is not as well-defined but is usually located west of Roswell on the Pecos Slope near the Chaves-Lincoln County Line. The Basin derives virtually all of its irrigation and drinking water from groundwater stored in a karstic artesian limestone aquifer contained within the Permian San Andres and Grayburg Formations, and from a shallow unconfined aquifer composed of Tertiary-Quaternary alluvial material deposited by the ancestral Pecos River *(Source: New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources).*

GROUNDWATER WELLS

Groundwater wells of various depths exist throughout Chaves County. Most of the deeper artesian wells are the source of water for agriculture and the community water systems. Shallow domestic wells serve many individual households *(see Water Systems map, page 159).* These wells vary widely in volume and water right priority dates.

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RURAL WATER CO-OPS

Five water co-ops presently operate in Chaves County, including Berrendo, Cumberland, Greenfield, Fambrough, and Lake Arthur. Each water co-op draws its water from artesian wells.

Berrendo Cooperative Water Users Association

The Berrendo Cooperative Water Users Association covers areas adjacent to Roswell and has approximately 1,524 members. Berrendo is supplied by three deep artesian wells from the Roswell Groundwater Basin. At times, the Berrendo system operated at capacity and caused many Chaves County residents in this district to connect into the City of Roswell water system and pay double monthly fees for their water. These conditions highlight the operational limitations of the cooperative's current infrastructure and the sensitivity of the system to demand fluctuations. Future improvements may be necessary to ensure reliable service and accommodate growth.

Cumberland Cooperative Water Users Association

The Cumberland Cooperative Water Users Association manages the water supply for the unincorporated community of Midway located between Roswell and Dexter. Cumberland currently serves approximately 223 customers and draws its water from a single artesian well. An engineering study that was completed in 2004 evaluated the current system and recommended improvements. The study indicated that the current system is troubled by old, under-sized water lines, low water pressures, and very little growth capacity. It is unknown whether improvements have been made since the time of the study.

Greenfield Mutual Domestic Water Users Association

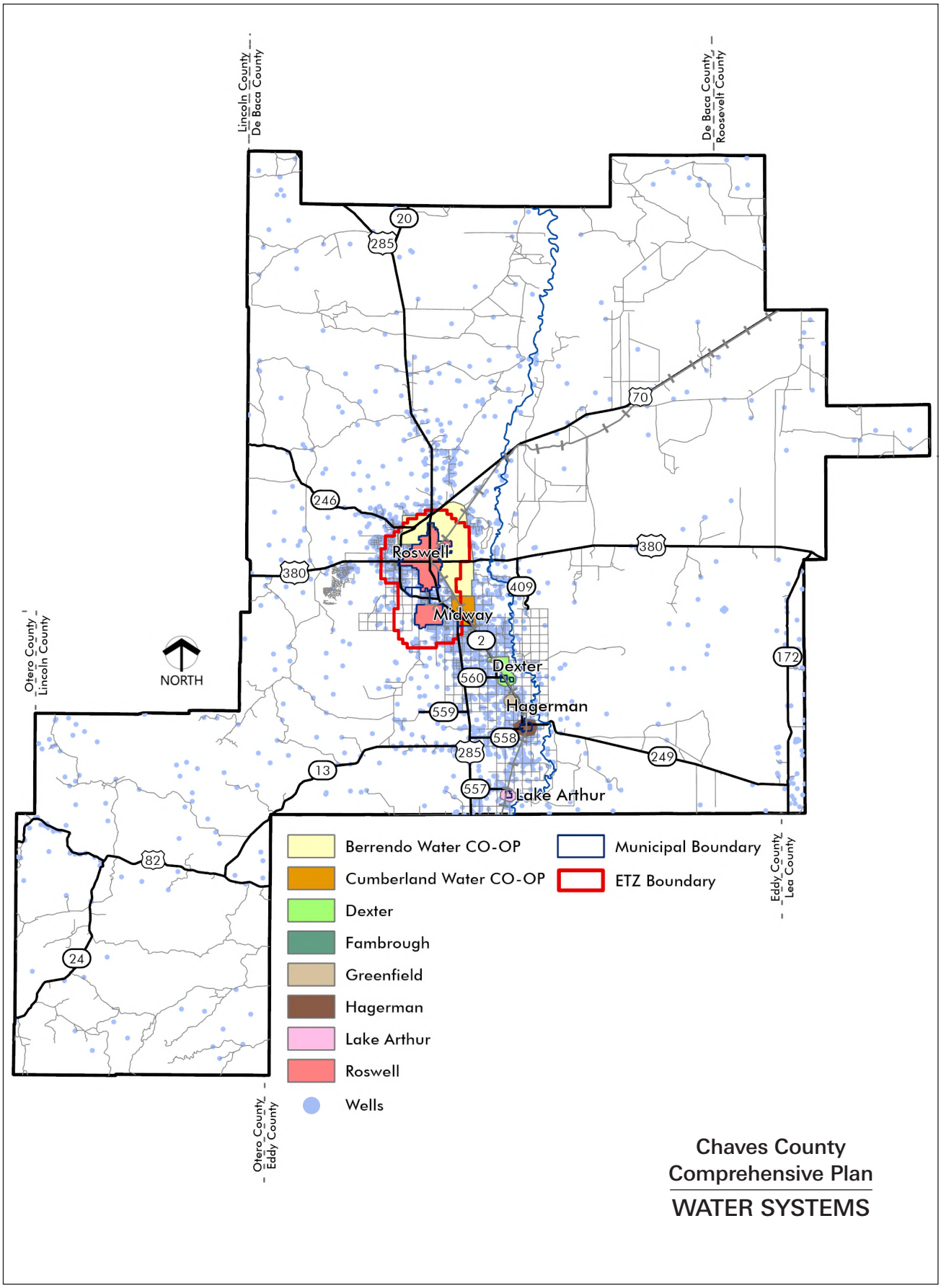
The Greenfield Mutual Domestic Water Users Association is located between the towns of Dexter and Hagerman and serves homes and businesses in the immediate vicinity. Greenfield currently serves approximately 73 customers, and the system includes a 1,000-foot well and a 100,000-gallon storage tank.

Fambrough Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association

The Fambrough Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association is located just southwest of Hagerman and serves the Pecos Valley-Hagerman Subdivision. Fambrough serves approximately 164 customers and has made improvements to its system, including the phased construction of a new waterline. The system is currently operating at full capacity, and there is a two-year waiting list for those requesting water service. Fambrough has implemented a moratorium on adding new water uses.

Lake Arthur Water Cooperative

The Lake Arthur Water Cooperative operates the water system for Lake Arthur, which is supplied by two primary wells located at the abandoned Atlas missile site, located east of Lake Arthur. The water storage facilities consist of an above-ground steel reservoir with a 120,000-gallon capacity and a concrete storage tank with a capacity of 30,000-gallons. Water lines are distributed throughout the developed areas of Lake Arthur.


Lincoln County
De Baca County
De Baca County
Roosevelt County
Otero County
Lincoln County
NORTH
Roswell
Midway
Dexter
Hagerman
Lake Arthur
20
285
70
246
380
380
409
2
560
559
558
285
557
13
82
24
172
249
Eddy County
Lea County
Otero County
Eddy County
Berrendo Water CO-OP
Cumberland Water CO-OP
Dexter
Fambrough
Greenfield
Hagerman
Lake Arthur
Roswell
Wells
Municipal Boundary
ETZ Boundary
Chaves County
Comprehensive Plan
WATER SYSTEMS

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Water co-ops generally develop individual master plans to serve their customers and understand the limits of their systems, and work best when developed in conjunction with new residential or industrial developments. Water co-ops are also eligible for financial grants through state and federal governments. They typically have a board of directors as the governing body to oversee operations and are generally composed of the co-op's water users, allowing for local participation in the operations and management.

PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS

There are four public water systems currently operating in Chaves County, including in the municipalities of Roswell, Dexter, Hagerman, and Lake Arthur. Each of these municipalities is served by deep artesian wells.

City of Roswell

The City of Roswell has several artesian wells and above-ground storage tanks located throughout the City, and its municipal water system has approximately 18,000 connections, serving its population of 48,422 people. The current *Water System Master Plan* was completed in 2012. The system has been designed to accommodate population projections.

Town of Dexter

The Town of Dexter has two artesian wells and two standpipe storage tanks. There are currently 550 connections to the system, which serve a population of 1,074.

Town of Hagerman

The Town of Hagerman is served by two artesian wells and two standpipe storage tanks. There currently are 476 connections to the system, which serves a population of 975.

Town of Lake Arthur

Lake Arthur's water system, operated by the Lake Arthur Water Cooperative, has undergone significant improvements between 2021 and 2023, including the installation of transmission lines, storage tank, pumps, building, and site work. Lake Arthur currently has a population of 378, with 182 water meters on its system, including a small number that are outside of town limits.

9.3 WATER SUPPLY CHALLENGES

WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION

Chaves County faces several water-related issues, including supply, conservation, and contamination. Unfortunately, all of these problems are long-term; they are the result of thousands of years of climatic trends, increasing population and density, and the lack of stewardship of the environment. Community Survey respondents identified water system updates and limited water supply for a growing population as the most important water issues facing Chaves County.

The Roswell Groundwater Basin and its artesian aquifers are considered to be one of the world's finest examples of rechargeable artesian aquifers. Even though New Mexico, including Chaves County, has been in a drought for many years, each year the artesian aquifers have made a recovery. However, that does not mean

that Chaves County has limitless water supplies. Some of the water derived from the artesian aquifers is fossil water, meaning that it was captured in pre-historic times when this area was under the influence of continental glaciation to the north. Present-day precipitation from the mountains to the west provides recharge to the aquifers; however, a long term reduction in supply began long before the settlers of the Pecos Valley arrived.

The long-term potential reduction in water supply is inevitable. The lower Pecos River basin is the only area in New Mexico that is fully metered to control the withdrawal of groundwater. For 40 years, there had been a metered limit of 3-acre feet per year on agricultural use and 2-acre feet for commercial use. Currently, the cap for domestic wells is 1-acre foot per year. The primary objective must be to make the best utilization possible of the water resources currently available and those available in the future. Conservation and smart use of water resources, both commercially and domestically, is the prudent alternative.

While the supply problem is climatologically controlled, utilization is in the hands of the public. Contamination is one of the greatest threats to the water supply today. Contamination is caused not only by old, leaky landfills and spills of hydrocarbons or chemicals, but also the misused surface applications of chemicals, animal waste, hydrocarbon spills and leaks, and salts used for de-icing in the winter. One quart of motor oil poured on the ground could contaminate up to 100,000 gallons of drinking water in the aquifer. Improperly maintained septic systems and poorly managed animal-feeding practices contribute to the problem of nitrate contamination. Both agricultural and residential over-fertilization chemically contaminates the groundwater. Illegal dumping also contaminate the surface and groundwater with a wide variety of compounds weathered from appliances, furniture, and automobiles. The solution to these problems is largely through education and enforcement.

PECOS RIVER COMPACT

As a result of a Supreme Court decision in 1987, New Mexico was determined to have under-delivered water to the State of Texas an average of 10,000 ac-ft/year. The Pecos River Compact, made between the states in the 1940s, requires New Mexico to give Texas one-half the water released from Sumner Dam, plus 46% of all the flood inflow to the state line based on the condition of the Pecos River in 1947. New Mexico paid Texas $14 million to settle prior year under-deliveries. After 1987, wet water must be delivered to the state line.

Unfortunately for Chaves County, water rights will be purchased by the state within the Roswell Basin and transferred to new well fields above Brantley Dam for diversion directly to the Pecos River to augment the water supply for the Carlsbad Irrigation District (CID) and ultimately, for satisfaction of the Texas vs. New Mexico Supreme Court decree. The purchase of these agricultural rights have had, and will continue to have, a negative impact on the tax base of Chaves County. These water right acquisitions are intended to preclude a priority water call – a measure that could be taken by the Office of the State Engineer to call back the most junior water rights - in the Pecos River Basin. A priority call would result in far more draconian economic results in the Pecos River Basin, affecting virtually every segment of the Chaves County economy.

The flow in the Pecos River is also the subject of concern for the various irrigation and conservation districts that reside in the valley. With the help of the Interstate Stream Commission, a tentative agreement was made among the stakeholders on how to manage the water in the Pecos River. This agreement ensures that each district and its members receive the minimum amount of water they require. These obligations and the continued proper management of the Pecos River are very important issues for the economic health of Chaves County.

VEGETATIVE THREATS

The salt cedar, an invasive, non-native phreatophyte (e.g., trees that consume a lot of water), is the dominant plant along the banks of the Pecos River, as well as other riverbanks throughout New Mexico. It consumes large quantities of water, up to 4.15-acre feet of water per year. This has an enormous impact on the Pecos River Basin area, and projects have been underway for many years to eradicate salt cedar, which will significantly increase the water levels in the Pecos River.

In addition to the salt cedar, other invasive woody vegetation has increased in Chaves County. This vegetation (e.g., mesquite) uses large amounts of water when compared to the herbaceous plants it replaced.

In the higher elevations in the western portion of Chaves County, evergreen vegetation, such as juniper and ponderosa pine, have expanded their area and thickened. These changes are thought to have interrupted or changed the hydrologic cycle. Some of these areas are at high risk for catastrophic stand replacement fires. These fires pose not only a threat to private property but also increase the probability of large silt-laden floods within Chaves County.

GROUNDWATER

Groundwater is the most important issue in Chaves County. All of the potable water and most of the irrigation water used in Chaves County is groundwater. The Office of the State Engineer is responsible for monitoring and managing the underground water levels throughout New Mexico. A regional office of the State Engineer, located in Roswell, provides local information and contact with the local communities.

In the 1930's, farmers, conservation districts, and other water users in Chaves County realized that the water supply was being depleted and have since taken drastic and very difficult-to-enact measures to limit the usage of water. The adjudication of water rights, metering wells in the Roswell Groundwater Basin, and the retirement of some water rights have resulted in a significant increase in the artesian water levels. Water usage has been gradually reduced up to 1/3 of the normal amount used since the metering of water use began in 1967 and the farmers of the Valley have had to learn to farm with less water.

CANNABIS WATER USE

Commercial cannabis is a rapidly expanding crop in Chaves County but uses a significant amount of water. The average outdoor cannabis plant can use up to six gallons of water per day during its primary outdoor growing season, with a mature plant requiring up to 480 gallons of water per season. Indoor greenhouse facilities use approximately 209 gallons per square foot for irrigation. Pecos Valley Production,



Pecos Valley Production cannabis facility.

a locally-owned cannabis production facility, transitioned their previous dairy operation to cannabis cultivation using state-of-the-art infrastructure that combines high-tech machinery and advanced cultivation techniques.

Commercial cannabis production in New Mexico requires lawful access to a sufficient water supply under the *New Mexico Cannabis Regulation Act.* A cannabis license may not be issued or maintained unless the applicant demonstrates compliant water access, as confirmed by either a municipal water provider or the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer (OSE). Outdoor in-ground cultivation may generally rely on agricultural or irrigation water rights, including acequia served water where otherwise lawful. Indoor cultivation, including greenhouses and hoophouses, is classified as a commercial use and requires a water right with a commercial purpose of use, which may necessitate formal conversion through the OSE. Domestic wells and long term water hauling are prohibited for commercial cannabis production.

Since water rights are regulated independently of land use approvals, the availability and legality of water may significantly limit the location and scale of cannabis cultivation and may constrain the areas where cannabis growing and cultivation can occur. Early coordination between Chaves County and potential commercial cannabis producers is crucial to ensure the crop does not stress the County's water resources.

9.4 WATER PLANNING

NEW MEXICO STATE WATER PLAN

The *New Mexico State Water Plan* serves as an educational tool and resource guide to provide information about established water-related programs and to help elected officials support and advance the current policies, procedures, and programs that provide the baseline for creating New Mexico's water future. The *New Mexico State Water Plan* is intended to be used by legislators, state agencies, county commissioners, local governments, public water suppliers, planners, businesses,

irrigators, industry professionals, and residents of New Mexico. It is designed to assist in planning, policy making, project implementation, decision-making, seeking resources, and to pursue funding opportunities.

Brief summaries of the three state statutes that govern regional and state water planning are as follows:

NMSA 72-14-3.1: This statute provides the structure to implement a comprehensive State Water Plan in collaboration with the Interstate Commission, State Engineer, and Water Trust Board. The State Water Plan is a strategic management tool to promote stewardship of the state's water resources, the protection of water rights, water supply, and water quality while providing a basis for prioritizing infrastructure investment through statewide continuity of policy and water resources management. The plan includes water budgets for all major river basins and aquifer systems, water conservation strategies and policies, and drought management plan. It also includes consultation with the Indian nations, tribes and pueblos.

NMSA 72-14-43: This statute requires that New Mexico's water needs be met by allowing each region of the state to plan for its water future. The statute allows the state to assist in planning by implementing a state appropriation program to ensure an adequate supply of water in each region.

NMSA 72-14-44: This statute provides authorization to the Interstate Stream Commission to appropriate groundwater or purchase water rights on behalf of the state's various regions. It also authorizes the Interstate Stream Commission to grant or loan funds for regional water planning.

50-YEAR WATER ACTION PLAN

The Office of the Governor released the *50-year Water Action Plan* (2023), which is an action plan to increase the water security in New Mexico. The *Water Action Plan* focuses on water conservation through the reduction of leaks, improved water storage, and incentivizing agricultural water conservation.

The *Water Action Plan* recommends seeking new water supplies by establishing a $500 million strategic water supply to spur investments in desalination and wastewater treatment. It advises the adoption of policies to expand potable and non-potable water reuse. The *Water Action Plan* also encourages the cleanup and protection of the watershed by identifying contaminated groundwater sites and controlling pollution through discharge permitting program.

LOWER PECOS VALLEY REGIONAL WATER PLAN

According to the *Lower Pecos Valley Regional Water Plan* (2016), communities in the region rely on a combination of groundwater and surface water, primarily from the Pecos River and local aquifers, to meet everyday needs for the population and livestock. Most water use supports agriculture, with additional water use for homes, businesses, and community services. In average years, current water supplies generally meet regional needs; however, the *Lower Pecos Valley Regional Water Plan* identified the region as highly vulnerable to drought, which has occurred frequently and severely in recent decades.

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The *Lower Pecos Valley Regional Water Plan* notes that future growth is expected mainly in parts of Chaves and Eddy counties, while other areas are likely to remain stable or decline. Overall water demand is not projected to increase significantly, but extended dry periods can create water shortages, especially when river flows are reduced and groundwater levels decline. Ongoing challenges include long-term drought, legal requirements to deliver water downstream under the *Pecos River Compact,* protection of sensitive wildlife habitats, and increased water use associated with economic activities, such as oil and gas development.

To prepare for these challenges, the *Lower Pecos Valley Regional Water Plan* emphasizes managing local water supplies more efficiently rather than relying on importing water from outside the region. Key recommendations include conserving water in homes, farms, and businesses; management of groundwater pumping; expanded reuse of treated and industrial water where appropriate (produced water); improved monitoring of water levels and water quality; watershed restoration to support natural recharge; and stronger drought planning. The *Lower Pecos Valley Regional Water Plan* stresses that continued coordination among local governments, water users, and state agencies is essential to ensure reliable water supplies that support communities, agriculture, and the regional economy over the long term.



Pecan orchard in Chaves County.

DESALINATION POTENTIAL

Desalinization has been used very successfully on a large scale for a number of years in arid regions of the world. Many countries depend on desalination for all of their potable water. New technology could be used to test the practical application of smaller, packaged desalination plants for areas such as the Pecos River Valley. A successful pilot desalination project was operated in Chaves County during the 1960's and 70's.

The Brackish Groundwater National Desalination Research Facility in Alamogordo is dedicated to studying groundwater desalination, the use of renewable energy in the process, and creating systems for desalination in rural and tribal communities. It is the only major research facility in the United States focused solely on the desalination

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of brackish and impaired groundwater. The facility aims to develop advanced water treatment to remove PFAS substances originating from Holloman Air Force Base and other military facilities and restore access to wells affected by contamination.

9.5 WATER CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

CHAVES SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

The Chaves County Soil and Water Conservation District is dedicated to promoting conservation and responsible development of natural resources within Chaves County. Its primary goal is to encourage the use of conservation practices and resource management methods to improve watershed health and productivity. The District provides technical, financial, and educational resources to farmers, ranchers, small tract landowners, individuals, and organizations. These efforts aim to increase awareness of soil and water conservation challenges, enabling the community to actively participate in preserving natural resources.

The Chaves Soil & Water Conservation District is implementing a comprehensive set of projects designed to restore ecological balance, improve soil health, and enhance wildlife habitats across southeastern New Mexico. Current efforts prioritize the control of invasive species such as salt cedar and Russian knapweed, which pose significant threats to riparian ecosystems. Through targeted herbicide applications and coordinated outreach, the District has successfully reclaimed numerous acres along waterways, improving hydrological function and supporting native vegetation recovery, which experienced declines during droughts.

The Chaves Soil and Water Conservation District is hard at work restoring landscapes and improving natural resources across southeastern New Mexico. The following is a list of the efforts performed by the Chaves Soil and Water Conservation District in 2025 and will continue in 2026:

- Salt Cedar & Weed Control: Targeted herbicide treatments help reclaim riparian areas from invasive salt cedar and Russian knapweed, improving water flow and native plant growth.
- Juniper Removal for Grassland Health: With support from the Land of Enchantment Legacy Fund, over 1,600 acres near the Town of Corona have been treated to address juniper encroachment, a major challenge for grassland health and open rangelands vital for livestock and wildlife.
- Healthy Soil Program: Cover crops have been planted on more than 1,200 acres in Chaves County to boost soil fertility and reduce erosion.
- Grassland Restoration Pilot: Innovative techniques like bale grazing and contour plowing funded by a grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are being tested to restore native grasses throughout Chaves County.
- Wildlife-Friendly Fencing: New fencing designs are improving pronghorn mobility and further wildlife habitat connectivity across private lands.

These projects reflect the SWCD commitment to long-term sustainability and balancing agricultural productivity with ecological health. Blending traditional

conservation practices with modern techniques ensure the land, water, and wildlife thrive into the future.

PECOS VALLEY ARTESIAN CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

The Pecos Valley Artesian Conservancy District (PVACD) maintains careful regulation, protection of water rights, and collaborative conservation projects, to preserve the long term health of the Roswell Artesian Basin. This is an essential foundation of the region's agricultural and economic stability. The PVACD was created in the early 1930s to address severe groundwater declines in the Roswell Artesian Basin. Since then, the District has become the central steward of the basin's water resources, working to ensure that groundwater remains reliable for agriculture, communities, and the regional economy.

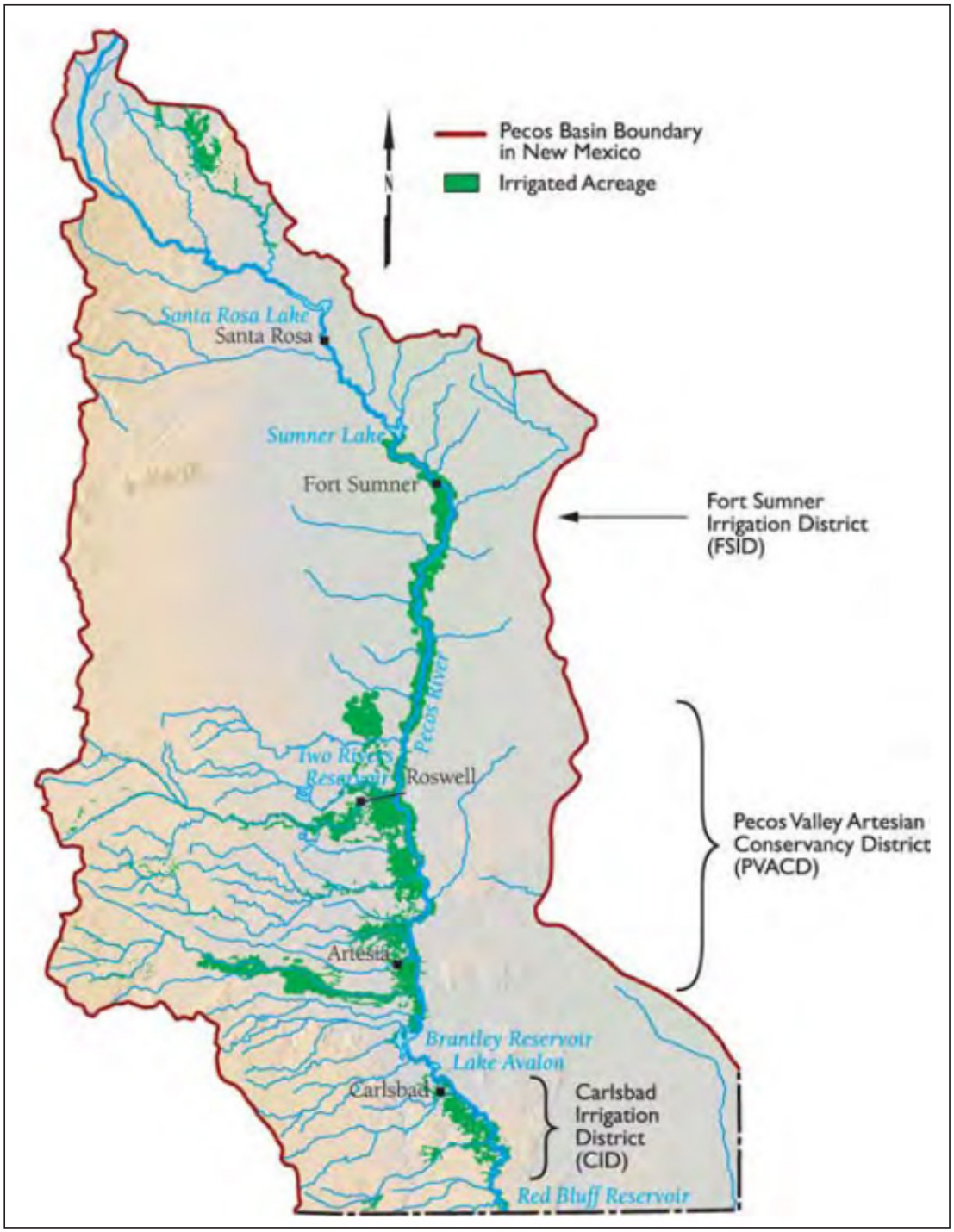
In 1970, a court ordered metering and adjudication system required every irrigation well in Chaves County to be metered and set strict limits on pumping over a five year period. This system helped stabilize groundwater levels, which today remain close to their 1970 benchmarks despite significant agricultural growth and increased efficiency. PVACD now maintains and services more than 1,500 meters and monitors aquifer levels through a network of observation wells read twice monthly.

In addition to measurement and regulation, the PVACD reviews new groundwater appropriation requests and protests applications that threaten basin sustainability. It also safeguards the legal requirement that water rights within the basin cannot be exported, successfully defending the basin against past proposals to pipe water elsewhere within New Mexico and Texas.

The PVACD partners with the Chaves Soil and Water Conservation District to restore landscapes and improve recharge conditions, including removing mesquite, juniper, and salt cedar, restoring grasslands, and maintaining natural sinkholes that funnel water into the aquifer. The District also provides low interest loans for farmers to adopt efficient irrigation systems, further reducing water waste.

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IRRIGATION DISTRICTS IN SOUTHEAST NEW MEXICO



Source: New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, *Irrigation Districts in New Mexico: A Legal Overview of Their Role and Function* (2003).

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9.6 WASTEWATER

Treatment and disposal of wastewater is directly tied to maintaining water quality by preventing contamination. Wastewater treatment has the potential for contaminating both surface and groundwater resources. Proper engineering principles utilized to treat domestic and commercial/industrial wastewater help minimize surface and groundwater contamination. Various wastewater treatment methods are currently utilized throughout Chaves County.

GROUND WATER QUALITY BUREAU

The New Mexico Ground Water Quality Bureau is a division of the New Mexico Environment Department. The Ground Water Quality Bureau is responsible for protecting New Mexico's groundwater resources as mandated by the *Water Quality Act* and the *New Mexico Ground and Surface Water Protection Regulations* (20.6 NMAC) and identifies, investigates, and cleans up contaminated sites to protect human health and the environment.

The Ground Water Quality Bureau provides the following services:

- Issues groundwater discharge permits to prevent contamination of resources;
- Implements the New Mexico Environment Department's responsibilities under the *New Mexico Mining Act* to ensure that environmental issues are addressed and standards are met;
- Identifies, investigates, and remediates inactive hazardous waste sites through implementation of the federal Superfund program;
- Implements the Voluntary Remediation Program and Brownfields Program;
- Oversees groundwater investigations and clean-ups; and
- Assists communities and the regulated community through a variety of programs, like the "water fairs".

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Individual households in Chaves County treat domestic wastewater with septic systems. These systems consist of a septic tank and leach field. Fortunately, the soil conditions found in Chaves County are conducive for the use of septic systems because they are moderately permeable. This allows for proper effluent absorption without over-saturation. Additionally, thick, impermeable clay layers protect the shallow aquifers. These conditions make individual septic systems effective in Chaves County.

The 5-acre minimum lot size requirement in the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* was designed to limit the risk of groundwater contamination by septic systems. The 2016 *Chaves County Comprehensive Plan* recommended allowing smaller lots within areas of the ETZ that meet certain conditions, including having a community water system and where soils are suitable for septic systems, or the ability to be served by the City of Roswell utility systems. While this specific change was not made to the ETZ Ordinance, there was an update to the R-3 zone, allowing multiple-family dwelling units on one lot, provided there are no more than six bedrooms between all units in order to be served by one septic tank.

Small packaged wastewater units are available for the treatment of both industrial and domestic wastewater. Residential developments can be designed with packaged treatment units to treat domestic wastewater from multiple households; however, these systems are significantly more expensive than conventional septic systems. The residents can be trained in the maintenance and operation of such systems, much like water co-ops are doing now.

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL TREATMENT FACILITIES

The two largest commercial/industrial wastewater producers in Chaves County are the Leprino Food processing plant in the ETZ and the Three Amigos Dairy in Dexter. There are numerous dairy facilities in Chaves County that generate significant quantities of wastewater. Leprino Foods treats its wastewater with large lagoons and applies the effluent on adjoining croplands. Similarly, dairies treat their wastewater with smaller lagoons and discard the effluent by land application or reuse. These treatment methods require careful monitoring but are highly effective and beneficial to nearby farmland.

Dairies are also regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for their surface water. The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) Groundwater Bureau regulates all of the groundwater discharge permits issued in Chaves County.

MUNICIPAL TREATMENT SYSTEMS

All of the incorporated communities in Chaves County use trickling filter, activated sludge, or modified constructed wetlands for wastewater treatment. Each municipality has made improvements to their systems over the years.

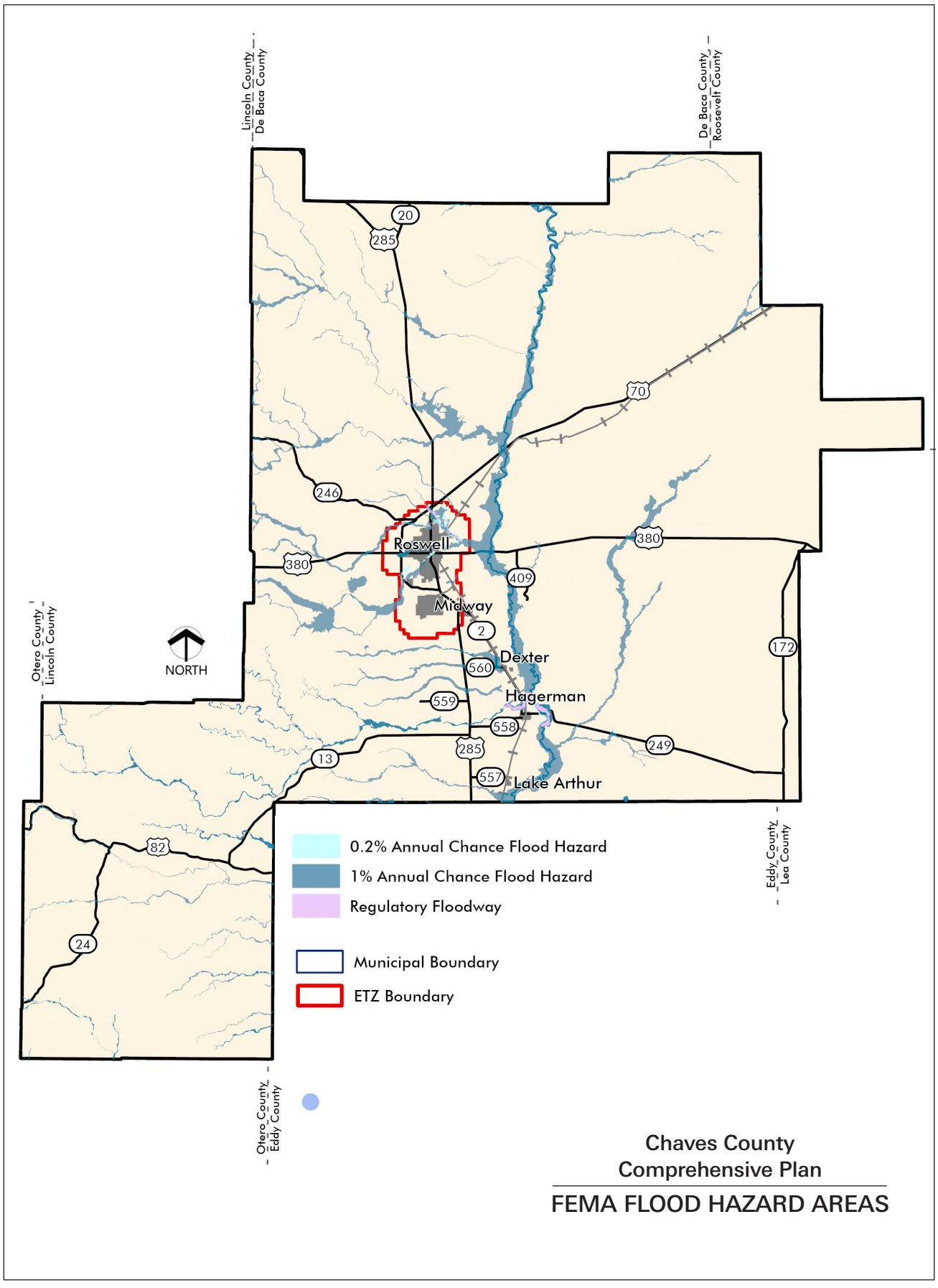
9.7 DRAINAGE

Managing storm drainage in Chaves County is the responsibility of the Chaves County Flood Commission, which was created by the County Commission in 1971 by combining the Rio Hondo-Roswell District with the Rio Felix District into one district. The Flood Commission is responsible for mitigating the effects of floods by improving drainageways and maintaining infrastructure to pass floods through Chaves County to the Pecos River without causing property damage.

FEMA FLOOD AREAS

The FEMA Flood Hazard Areas map *(see page 171)* illustrates the designated flood hazard areas within Chaves County and identifies the locations subject to varying levels of flood risk. The map is intended to assist jurisdictions in land use planning, infrastructure placement, emergency preparedness, and compliance with federal floodplain management requirements.

The shaded areas along rivers, arroyos, and drainage corridors represent zones that are at risk of flooding during specified storm events. Areas labeled as the 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard, or the 100-year floodplain, indicate locations with a one-percent chance of flooding in any given year. These areas are subject to FEMA floodplain regulations, and development within them typically requires floodplain permits and, in some cases, flood insurance. Areas labeled as the 0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard, or the 500-year floodplain, represent lower probability but potentially significant flooding events.


Lincoln County
De Baca County
De Baca County
Roosevelt County
20
285
70
246
Roswell
380
380
409
Midway
2
Dexter
560
172
Otero County
Lincoln County
NORTH
559
Hagerman
558
285
249
13
557
Lake Arthur
Eddy County
Lea County
82
24
0.2% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
Regulatory Floodway
Municipal Boundary
ETZ Boundary
Otero County
Eddy County
Chaves County
Comprehensive Plan
FEMA FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

The FEMA Flood Hazard Areas map also identifies regulatory floodways, which are the central portions of floodplains where floodwaters move fastest and deepest. These floodways are critical for safely conveying floodwaters downstream. They are typically subject to the most restrictive development standards where new structures are typically prohibited unless it can be shown that they will not increase flood levels.

The FEMA Flood Hazard Areas map shows that the flood risks in Chaves County are concentrated primarily along the Pecos River and associated tributaries. These areas are prone to intense flooding and require careful flood plain management and emergency planning.

An example of the area's vulnerability to extreme flooding is the flooding that occurred in 2024. On October 19, 2024, a series of intense storms north of Roswell resulted in nearly six inches of rain in a very short period, causing fatal and catastrophic flooding in Roswell and compromising bridges and low-water crossings throughout Chaves County. The main effect was seen on the Spring River canal that runs through Roswell and the Rio Felix near Dexter and Hagerman. As a result of this flood, at least two bridges need short-term repairs while Chaves County awaits funding for long-term reconstruction. Several low water crossings also need immediate attention.

After the 2024 flood, it became clear that more storm drainage engineering is needed throughout Chaves County. The public has been warned about dangerous conditions following the flood, advising people to stay away from moving or standing water and to avoid certain roads that are impassable. The Sheriff's Office was involved in multiple rescues and issued warnings for areas impacted by flooding.

To better understand how storm drainage has changed over time and contributed to events like the 2024 flood, the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) is conducting a major engineering study of the Rio Hondo and Rio Bonito watershed, which extends from Ruidoso to the Pecos River. Chaves County believes the study could strongly support future efforts to mitigate drainage issues throughout the region.

9.8 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE GOAL 1

Protect the quality and supply of water resources in Chaves County.

Objectives:

- *Objective 1.a: To ensure groundwater is safe from existing and potential chemical and biological contamination sources and illegal dumping.*
- *Objective 1.b: To ensure an adequate water supply for new technologies, changes in land use, and new residential or commercial development.*

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 1.1

Chaves County shall support long-range regional water planning and pursue the implementation of the *Lower Pecos Regional Water Plan* with other jurisdictions

and entities with a primary focus on protecting Pecos River water and keeping it in the Pecos Valley.

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 1.2

Chaves County shall work with other federal and state agencies to identify and eliminate invasive and heavy water consuming tree and plant species from the Pecos River Valley. Efforts will include:

- Contacting the New Mexico Environment Department and soil and water conservation districts to determine what efforts are going on state-wide and how these could be applied to Chaves County;
- Identifying research methods, funding sources, and seek funding for invasive plant control;
- Studying the impacts to crops and pastureland from herbicides and pesticides used for control; and
- Identifying areas of the Pecos River to be targeted for the control of invasive species.

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 1.3

Chaves County shall require that all new residential development in the County demonstrates sufficient water supply for the development through the subdivision review process.

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 1.4

Chaves County shall support the establishment of shared wells, domestic water systems, and the Pecos Valley Artesian Conservancy District's efforts in the metering of domestic water wells and water co-ops.

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 1.5

Chaves County shall amend the *Subdivision Ordinance* to include provisions to adequately protect the County's water supply.

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE GOAL 2

Provide for the safe and efficient disposal of liquid waste.

Objectives:

- *Objective 2.a: To protect groundwater resources and the public health, safety, and welfare.*
- *Objective 2.b: To limit the number of individual septic systems.*

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 2.1

Chaves County shall monitor the development of sewage treatment facilities in the County and incorporated communities.

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 2.2

Chaves County shall promote the use of small package sewage treatment systems for residential development and the replacement of old septic tanks.

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WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 2.3

Chaves County shall work with the Ground Water Quality Bureau of the New Mexico Environment Department to identify facilities that are not in compliance with liquid waste disposal regulations, identify potential water contamination sources, assist in implementing corrective measures, and provide financial and technical assistance through the Brownfields Program and the Voluntary Remediation Program.

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 2.4

Chaves County shall support continued improvements and expansion to the municipal wastewater systems within the County.

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE GOAL 3

Support the use of produced water and treated effluent for irrigation and land application purposes.

Objectives:

- *Objective 3.a: To reduce the use of potable water for landscape irrigation at public facilities.*

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 3.1

Chaves County shall pursue the use of produced water and treated effluent for irrigation, land application purposes, roads, non-edible agriculture, and industrial uses, wherever feasible.

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE GOAL 4

Ensure Chaves County has adequate drainage from future major flood events and emergencies.

Objectives:

- *Objective 4.a: To protect life, public and private property, and the economy from the impact of major storm events.*
- *Objective 4.b: To increase the resilience of Chaves County in the event of a major flood event.*

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 4.1

Chaves County shall coordinate with the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management on completing the Rio Hondo and Rio Bonito watersheds engineering study.

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 4.2

Chaves County shall include strategies based on the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management study for flood mitigation and drainage improvements in an update to the *Chaves County Hazard Mitigation Plan.*

WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 4.3

Chaves County shall support the Chaves County Flood Commission's role in ensuring the County has adequate stormwater drainage mitigation and facilities and continues to identify drainage issues prior to major storm events.

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10 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

A SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES TOWARDS MEETING THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF CHAVES COUNTY

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10.1 INTRODUCTION

The *Chaves County Comprehensive Plan* consists of seven major planning elements, including Public Lands; Land Use; Code Enforcement; Economic Development; Housing; Transportation; and Water, Wastewater, and Drainage. Each of these elements contain goals, objectives, and actions that were developed based on background research and existing conditions, public engagement, consultation with the Steering Committee and County staff, and best practices in community planning.

The actions are intended to implement the community vision for Chaves County. The strategies are listed under each set of goals and objectives within each planning element and are repeated in the Implementation Plan. They are categorized by *Comprehensive Plan* element, and supplemented by the estimated project completion times and identification of the lead Chaves County entity for implementation. Implementation completion times are as follows:

- 2026-2028 (short)
- 2029-2033 (medium)
- 2034-2041 (long)
- Ongoing (no end date)

The Implementation Plan is intended to assist the Chaves County in planning and securing funding for capital improvements and allocating resources for administrative changes or amendments. The Implementation Plan is intended to be non-binding and flexible, and dependent on available funding, staff resources, and Chaves County's ability to engage in partnerships with other local and regional entities.

10.2 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TABLES

The Implementation Plan tables start on page 179 and provide the complete list of actions organized by Plan element. For additional information and background on the strategies crafted to achieve the community's goals and objectives, refer to the specific chapter. The Implementation Plan tables are organized as follows:

- Chapter 3: Public Lands (pages 179-184)
- Chapter 4: Land Use (pages 185-187)
- Chapter 5: Code Enforcement (page 187)
- Chapter 6: Economic Development (page 188-189)
- Chapter 7: Housing (page 190)
- Chapter 8: Transportation (page 191)
- Chapter 9: Water, Wastewater, and Drainage (pages 192-193)

Agency acronyms used in the Implementation Plan are as follows:

- BLM: Bureau of Land Management
- CCCES: Chaves County Cooperative Extension Service
- CSWCD: Chaves Soil and Water Conservation District
- DOD: US Department of Defense
- EMNRD-SPD: Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, State Parks Division

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- NMDG&F: New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
- NMORD: New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division
- NRCS: National Resources Conservation Service
- RCCEDC: Roswell-Chaves County Economic Development Corporation
- SLO: State Land Office
- SNMEDD: Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District
- NMEDD: New Mexico Economic Development Department
- USFS: US Forest Service

CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC LANDS ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.1: Chaves County, through the Chaves County Land Council (CCLC), shall transmit a copy of the adopted *Comprehensive Plan* and any future revisions or amendments to all state and federal agencies with management responsibilities within the geographic boundaries of Chaves County.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.2: All federal agencies shall coordinate continuously with the Board of County Commissioners ensuring early notice and discussion of all issues that may impact Chaves County, for the purpose of resolving conflicts prior to the public participation process. It should be noted that "Cooperating agency status", which refers to a formal recognition of involvement in an agency's planning activities, is not equivalent to "coordination" as required by federal government policies and shall not be accepted as such by Chaves County.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; BLM; USFS; DOD
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.3: Being fully apprised of the County's positions, federal and state agencies shall inform the Board of Commissioners of any potential conflicts with their plans, programs or policies, early in the process and prior to public release of the proposed plans, programs, and policies.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; BLM; USFS; DOD; SLO
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.4: The Board of County Commissioners will work with the federal and state agencies to resolve conflicts between the planning authorities, but shall not approve or endorse any plans, programs, or policies that harm the health, safety, or welfare of Chaves County.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.5: Federal and state planning efforts shall acknowledge Chaves County's position and any conflicts with the County's plans when released to the public, so that the public may also take into account the needs of Chaves County during the public comment and participation processes.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; BLM; USFS; DOD; SLO
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.6: Chaves County shall develop monitoring and compliance standards to evaluate this *Comprehensive Plan* and to ensure consistency between federal and state actions and activities and the land use requirements presented within this Plan.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.7: Chaves County, through the Chaves County Land Council (CCLC), shall establish a mechanism for tracking and reviewing all federal and state land transactions, including land adjustments, purchases, disposals, and exchanges by close consultation, coordination, and cooperation and with full public participation. Local federal agency offices should provide regular updates on all activities and proposed actions on federal lands to the CCLC.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	County Manager; CCLC
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.8: All land and resource inventory processes conducted within the political boundaries of Chaves County shall be coordinated with the County. The County: 1) Shall be notified directly by the agency prior to beginning the inventory process; 2) Shall have the opportunity to participate fully in the process as allowed by law; and 3) Shall have the opportunity to review and identify possible conflicts with the findings of the inventory process at least 120 days prior to public release of the information.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; BLM; USFS; DOD; SLO
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.9: Proposed federal or state specially designated areas shall be presented to the CCLC in a timely manner so that Chaves County may participate in the planning process.	Ongoing (No end date)	County Manager; BLM; USFS; DOD; SLO
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.10: Given livestock grazing is a vital industry that supports Chaves County Services, grazing shall continue to be a valid use of all lands with special designations. The restrictions placed on lands with special designations shall not reduce the levels of grazing or increase the grazing expense on the producer.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager

CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC LANDS ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.11: Only those areas that meet the specific definition of wilderness as set forth in the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. §1131) shall be considered as having Wilderness Characteristics in the inventory process. ◂ Areas contiguous with lands that already have been identified as having wilderness potential or are set aside for conservation through conservation easements or other such instruments, will not be considered as candidates for special designation because such designations would create too large of an area restricted and potentially inaccessible to Chaves County to fulfill its public health and safety duties. These include: 1) Designated Wilderness; 2) BLM Wilderness Study Areas; 3) USFWS areas proposed for Wilderness Designation; 4) USFS Wilderness Study Areas or areas of Recommended Wilderness; 5) National Park Service areas recommended or proposed for designation; 6) Lands with Conservation Easements or similar restrictive devices; 7) Areas of Critical Environmental Concern; 8) Wild and Scenic Rivers; 9) National Monuments; 10) Lands with Formal Critical Habitat; 11) Any island of the public lands without roads. ◂ As a part of the inventory process, a multiple use check list will be developed to document all productive uses of the areas being considered, which will include livestock grazing, mining, timber production, oil and gas, recreation, hunting, and other uses of the lands that fulfill the multiple use objective required of Congress in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). These multiple uses contribute to the economic well-being of the citizens of Chaves County. The producers that utilize these lands are essential to Chaves County by providing the revenue necessary to ensure adequate County services. ◂ Where an area inventoried for special land use designation exhibits significant "multiple-use" characteristics necessary for the continued well-being of Chaves County, they shall be excluded from consideration.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; BLM; USFS; DOD; SLO
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.12: Prior to the publication of a proposed designation of an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and in the Federal Register, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), US Forest Service (USFS), Department of Defense (DOD), and other state or federal agencies shall coordinate with the Board of County Commissioners on the proposal to determine if designation of the ACEC creates any conflicts with the Chaves County's plans as required by 43 U.S.C. §1712(c)(9). Specifically, the agency shall: 1) Discuss with Chaves County the "relevance" and "importance" of the area the agency has determined gives rise to the special designation; 2) Recognize that the oil and gas fields in Chaves County are unique geologic systems that meet the "relevance and importance" criteria for designation as an ACEC. The extraction of these resources is a national priority providing vital resources that protect the public's health and safety, and therefore, shall not be restricted; 3) Determine whether the specific activities BLM or other agency plans to restrict in the proposed area meets the criteria set forth in federal law as causing "irreparable damage to important historic, cultural, or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards," (43 USC § 1702 (a)). Any activities proposed for restriction that do not meet this requirement shall be allowed to continue if the ACEC is designated; 4) Provide to Chaves County the Agency's review under the Information Quality Act (44 U.S.C. §3516) all studies and data used to determine certain activities are harmful to the restricted area; and Coordinate the special management activities with Chaves County in an area designated as an ACEC as required under the *Federal Land Management and Policy Act* and directed through the BLM handbook at 1613.12 or the congressionally approved management document of the agency.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; BLM; USFS; DOD

CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC LANDS ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.13: Chaves County, through the CLCC, shall monitor federal and state agency plans, policies, and changes to land status/ownership as they relate to Chaves County land use policies.	Ongoing (No end date)	County Manager; CLCC
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.14: When a new land designation, exchange, or change in management is being considered by state or federal entities within Chaves County's jurisdiction, the agencies shall coordinate with the County to determine if the change will cause any unresolved conflicts with the County's interests and discuss options to resolve those conflicts.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; BLM; USFS; DOD; SLO
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.15: On a continual basis, Chaves County Planning and Zoning, in conjunction with the County Assessor's office, shall update and keep current all County land use maps, including data from the federal and state agencies located in Chaves County.	Ongoing (No end date)	Planning and Zoning Dept.
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 1.16: Federal and state agencies shall make available all relevant land use data to Chaves County to ensure harmonious planning between the entities and provide the County Commission with documentation of all impact analyses, including socioeconomic impacts.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; BLM; USFS; DOD; SLO
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.1: Chaves County shall consider livestock grazing as an "equitable estate".	Ongoing (No end date)	County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.2: Chaves County shall adopt a definition of private property rights that is based upon the definition found in the Attorney General's Guidelines for the evaluation of Risk and Avoidance of Unanticipated Takings dated June 30, 1988. The definition shall include protection by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments of the Constitution of the United States that includes real and personal, tangible, and intangible property and ensures that private property includes "investment backed expectations".	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.3: Chaves County shall promote the use of federal and state trust lands that respect private property rights and increase free market opportunities for all Chaves County residents.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.4: Livestock grazing on federal and state trust lands shall continue at levels consistent with proper range management, 'custom and culture', and the protection of equitable property rights.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; BLM; USFS; DOD; SLO
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.5: Chaves County shall develop incentives for improving grazing land and promoting good land stewardship through: 1) Permittee ownership of range improvements; 2) Development of Grazing Advisory Boards; 3) Appropriate fee schedules; 4) Subleasing of grazing permits and leases; 5) Allotment management plan flexibility; and 6) Increasing grazing capacity or allowing other economic benefits to accrue to permittees making investment in range betterment.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.6: Chaves County shall coordinate with federal land agencies to ensure that they do not acquire any private lands or rights within Chaves County, including those that hold conservation easements in perpetuity, without addressing the following considerations: 1) That, at a minimum, parity in land value by status is maintained in each school district; and 2) That private property interests are protected and enhanced.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager

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CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC LANDS ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.7: Chaves County shall require land exchanges or adjustment of land to use the following strategies: 1) Permittees or other users will have preferential options to purchase federal or State Trust lands that lie within or adjacent to lands they currently lease or own when those lands are considered for adjustment or disposition; 2) Request that the New Mexico State Land Office assist Chaves County in coordinating land exchanges so as to maximize patented fee simple lands; 3) In situations where the Chaves County Commissioners determine that federal land agencies are proposing to change the local historic custom, culture, and community stability of land use, the Chaves County Commissioners, at their discretion, may require adverse impact studies as outlined in Presidential Executive Order 12630, which requires that all federal agencies complete a Taking Implication Assessment to evaluate the effect of their rules, regulations, and decisions on: 1) Private property; 2) Private property rights; and 3) The investment backed expectations of private citizens. These requirements shall be conducted and mitigation measures adopted with concurrence from Chaves County. Adverse impact studies shall address all classes of grazing rights, flood prone areas, public access, and the health and well-being of the citizens of Chaves County.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.8: Chaves County shall adopt the principles of the Public Rangelands Improvement Act, 43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq. as County policy. The procedures set forth in the Public Rangelands Improvement Act and accompanying Memorandums of Understanding as modified by this *Comprehensive Plan* shall govern all actions involving the federal agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Forest Service (USFS), and either an individual or group of livestock grazing permittee(s) or lessee(s), including but not necessarily limited to the creation or revision of an allotment management plan, and other like actions or as requested by the permittee(s) or lessee(s).	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.9: Chaves County shall coordinate with the BLM and the USFS in initiating the consultation procedures described in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Governor of New Mexico and the New Mexico State Director, BLM, US Department of the Interior, dated July 30, 1980. In addition, Chaves County shall coordinate the initiation of consultation procedures described in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Director of the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) and the Regional Forester, US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS) Southwestern Region, dated July 28th, 1987.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.10: Chaves County may develop, in coordination with federal and state governments, an effective Section 8 process pursuant to the Public Rangeland Improvement Act of 1978 and may implement procedures and guidelines to account for the allocation expenditures of range improvements funds and funds collected through the Sikes Act.	2029-2033 (Medium-term)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 2.11: Chaves County may adopt a policy in relation to the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) 43 U.S.C. 1901 et seq. with a Memorandum of Understanding between the State of New Mexico and the BLM, the Regional Forester, US Forest Service, the purpose of which is to promote efficient multiple management of the range resources in Chaves County.	2029-2033 (Medium-term)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 3.1: Chaves County shall recognize that the County Sheriff is the senior law enforcement officer in Chaves County. As such, the Chaves County Sheriff shall have primary jurisdiction over all law enforcement matters within Chaves County outside the limits of incorporated cities, towns, and villages.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; County Sheriff's Office

CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC LANDS ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 3.2: All open trails and roads should be designated as open. Full open access should be made available to the public lands for local purposes, such as safety, health, economics, and use of recreations, as assured by federal and state law. No road or trail should be closed unless public safety or health demands its closing. No RS 2477 right-of-way should be closed.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	County Manager; BLM; USFS; SLO
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 3.3: All inventory actions of the trails and roads in Chaves County by federal and state agencies shall be coordinated with the County: 1) If a federal or state agency conducting inventory of roads or trails plans to hire contractors to gather the inventory data, local organizations that have familiarity with Chaves County, such as the soil and water conservation districts, shall be contacted by the agency and offered an opportunity to bid for the contract; and 2) The Board of County Commissioners and the County Sheriff's office shall be notified prior to the initiation of the inventory work, as to who has been retained, and the location and schedule for the work to be performed.	Ongoing (No end date)	County Manager; BLM; USFS; SLO
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 4.1: Chaves County shall establish a mechanism to determine and notify affected federal and state agencies concerning issues regarding wild animals, hunting, or other issues impacting private land or the 'custom and culture' of Chaves County.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 5.1: Chaves County may encourage Congress to promote a wetlands policy to include only those areas that actually function as wetlands, which would allow for the development of wetlands areas when overriding public need requires such development and it is offset by suitable mitigation actions, and does not require land designated as agricultural land by the USDA prior to 1985 to be restored to conditions that existed prior to agricultural use. Chaves County may, at the option of the County Commission, be the lead agency in designating wetlands. Wetlands are defined as "Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions."	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 5.2: Chaves County shall continue to coordinate with the Chaves Soil and Water Conservation District's Noxious Weed Removal initiative and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Noxious Weed Program and its noxious weed coordinator to manage on-the-ground noxious weed reduction.	Ongoing (No end date)	County Manager; CSWCD; NRCS

CHAPTER 3: PUBLIC LANDS ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 5.3: Chaves County shall participate fully as allowed by law in all processes for the purpose of identifying and classifying species of special status that may impact the County. This includes the formulation of plans for the recovery of any federal or state listed threatened or endangered species, including any proposed introduction or re-introduction of a species by artificial actions of government agencies or personnel: 1) Chaves County is authorized to engage in conservation efforts for the purpose of benefiting species within the County. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must coordinate with the County pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) at (16 U.S.C. 1533(b)(1)(A)) and consider the County's policies and conservation efforts prior to making a determination regarding the threatened or endangered status of a species. Prior to making a determination whether a species is threatened or endangered, the federal agency is required to take into account "those efforts, if any, being made by any State or foreign nations, or any political subdivision of a State or foreign nation, to protect such species, whether by predator control, protection of habitat and food supply, or any other conservation practices, within any area under its jurisdiction; or on the high seas." This includes a review of Chaves County's plans, policies, and projects, as well as those of other local governments with conservation interests in the County; and 2) The ESA also requires that the US Fish and Wildlife Service cooperate with Chaves County to resolve any water resource concerns related to the conservation of species. "It is the policy of the Congress that Federal agencies shall cooperate with State and local agencies to resolve water resource issues in concert with conservation of endangered species," (16 U.S.C. 1531(c)(2)). Pursuant to this provision, Chaves County requires that before species are placed under federal protection and before critical habitat is designated and before species are introduced or reintroduced into the County by federal or state agencies, that the agencies first coordinate with the County and all local governments to resolve any water resource concerns that may develop as a result of the federal or state agency action; 3) The best available science is to be utilized by all agencies when determining the status of a species or condition of resources. All scientific data shall be held to the standard of review required by the Information Quality Act (44 U.S.C. §3516). Any study, data, or other scientific document that does not meet this standard shall not be used to support a finding that leads to the federal or state protection of a species; and 4) Critical habitat designations must take local socio-economic impacts into account. Areas may be excluded as critical habitat based upon economic impacts unless the failure to designate the area as critical habitat would result in extinction of the species.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 5.4: Chaves County shall promote and facilitate public and private recreational opportunities compatible with local 'custom and culture'.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 5.5: Federal and state trust land and wildlife management and enforcement agencies shall coordinate with Chaves County on matters regarding wildlife and resources. The Board of County Commissioners shall review and comment on all plans and proposals prior to finalization or initiation of actions by federal and state agencies.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; BLM; USFS; NMDG&F; SLO
PUBLIC LANDS ACTION 6.1: Chaves County shall review all decisions made by federal and state agencies concerning the extractive industries that have an economic impact on the citizens of Chaves County.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager

CHAPTER 4: LAND USE ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
LAND USE ACTION 1.1: Chaves County shall form an agricultural committee comprised of agricultural producers to prevent agricultural lands from being negatively impacted by County land use regulations and should include an existing agriculture industry representative that sits on the Chaves County Land Council (CCLC).	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 1.2: Chaves County shall adopt a Right-to-Farm ordinance as an official statement that agriculture is a valuable part of Chaves County's economy, and 'custom and culture'. The primary focus of the ordinance shall be to strengthen the farmer's legal position when sued for private nuisance. Characteristics that should be considered include: 1) Notices placed on deeds/disclosure statements on properties in agricultural areas; 2) Public education on the importance of farming to the local economy and the County's 'custom and culture'; and 3) Protection from lawsuits filed by neighbors who move into an agricultural area after the ranch, farm, or dairy has been established and in operation.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 1.3: Chaves County shall explore the feasibility of using incentives for preserving agricultural lands, but do not include conservation easements held in perpetuity for consideration as an incentive.	2029-2033 (Medium-term)	BCC; County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 2.1: Chaves County shall develop siting and buffer criteria for proposed extraction uses in proximity (i.e., 1,000 feet) to residential development and incorporate the criteria into the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* for special use permits to be reviewed and approved by Chaves County.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 3.1: Chaves County shall revise the *Roswell-Chaves County Extraterritorial Zoning Ordinance* and the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* to provide for: 1) A gradation of commercial uses ranging from rural/neighborhood commercial, community commercial, to regional commercial; 2) A gradation of industrial uses ranging from light industrial to heavy manufacturing; 3) Regulation of schools, churches, and cell towers; and 4) Examination and revision to the definition of home occupation to ensure that it meets the needs of Chaves County residents.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 3.2: Chaves County shall utilize the *Future Land Use Map* to assist in guiding the location of future commercial and industrial development. The Planning and Zoning Department shall study existing and future development to determine if the Future Land Use Map has created desirable land use and development patterns for Chaves County. The criteria for commercial and industrial development shall include, but not be limited to: 1) Determination of whether there are negative impacts to agriculture, extraction, hunting, or recreational activities; 2) Ingress and egress considerations; 3) Limiting industrial development to the east side, existing access points along the Roswell Bypass, and the South Main area; 4) Access to the major transportation network, particularly for industrial development, including arterials and rail; 5) Consideration of the impact to existing residential neighborhoods; and 6) A provision to review locations and assumptions if and when the City of Roswell extends infrastructure to the ETZ.	Ongoing (No end date)	Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 3.3: Chaves County shall use the *Future Land Use Map* as a guide to identify areas suitable for industrial, solar, Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), and nuclear facilities, and data centers.	Ongoing (No end date)	Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 4.1: Chaves County shall amend the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* to include development and location standards for the siting of communication towers and solar, wind, battery energy storage systems, and biomass energy facilities, and data centers (outside the ETZ only).	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; Planning & Zoning Dept.

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CHAPTER 4: LAND USE ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
LAND USE ACTION 4.2: As an amendment to the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance,* Chaves County shall establish an Arterial Overlay District (similar to Article 18 of the ETZ Ordinance) that contains development performance standards for new commercial and industrial development that address setbacks, buffering, lighting, building height, walls/fences, landscape/xeriscape, and screening of dumpster areas.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 5.1: Chaves County shall amend the *Roswell-Chaves County Extraterritorial Zoning Ordinance* to allow lots that are smaller than 5 acres in designated areas of the ETZ that generally meet the following conditions: 1) Transition areas within the ETZ that correspond to the City of Roswell's ability to deliver municipal utility services; 2) As part of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) that has a community water system; and 3) In the ETZ for areas served by a community water system and where soils are suitable for septic systems.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; Planning & Zoning Dept.; City of Roswell
LAND USE ACTION 6.1: Chaves County shall amend the *Roswell-Chaves County Extraterritorial Zoning Ordinance* and the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* to limit the size of the accessory dwelling units allowed; require a Special Use Permit; establish a process to follow up with Chaves County Code Enforcement; and allow for administrative review and approval of accessory dwelling unit requests.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; Planning & Zoning Dept.; City of Roswell
LAND USE ACTION 7.1: Chaves County shall complete an update to the current *Chaves County Subdivision Ordinance* that includes, but is not limited to the following: 1) Encourage domestic well sharing between property owners; 2) Require installation of a meter on water wells; 3) Establish the three procedures for division of land in Chaves County (Summary, Exemption, and Preliminary/Final); 4) Eliminate "entitlement of exemption" and provide a review and action process for all claims of exemptions, including an explicit definition for "immediate family" and requiring proof of the relationship prior to approval; 5) Create additional regulations on all claims of exemption to provide and protect the public health, safety, and general welfare of Chaves County residents; 6) Establish a mandatory verification process to ensure that deeds are recorded within a specified timeframe, including a provision that if transfers are not completed, the plat should be declared null and void; 7) Institute plat data requirements for claim of exemption and summary plats; 8) Require necessary access roads, drainage, and infrastructure are provided in all division of lands; 9) Ensure compliance with subdivision development regulations prior to filing of the final plat and construction of any new structures; 10) Conditions of approval that shall be met prior to filing the subdivision plat with the Chaves County Clerk's Office, including but not limited to roadway construction per Transportation Action 2.3; and 11) Communication with state and federal agencies when necessary.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 8.1: Chaves County shall require applicants to notify and address the concerns of adjacent property owners prior to submitting their application for a proposed renewable energy project to the County.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 8.2: Chaves County shall develop notification requirements and procedures for proposed renewable energy projects.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 8.3: Chaves County shall create and incorporate zoning performance standards into the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* for utility-scale solar energy facilities that address setbacks, maximum height limits, panel spacing, visual screening, sensitive lands protection, stormwater management, decommissioning, and site restoration process.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Planning & Zoning Dept.

CHAPTER 4: LAND USE ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
LAND USE ACTION 8.4: Chaves County shall create and incorporate zoning performance standards into the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* for battery energy storage systems that address fire risk assessments, acoustic insulation, visual screening, spill containment, equipment spacing, and minimum buffers to existing residential development.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 8.5: Chaves County shall create and incorporate zoning performance standards into the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* for data centers that consider adjacent land uses, availability of natural resources, utility system capacity, and require impact assessments on water resources and rangeland.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 9.1: Chaves County shall work cooperatively with the City of Roswell on planning for the ETZ. This planning should include subdivisions, zoning, roadway extensions, water and wastewater services, and capital improvements.	Ongoing (No end date)	Planning & Zoning Dept.
LAND USE ACTION 10.1: Review and periodically revise County land development ordinances as necessary to reflect the goals, objectives, and policy actions as presented in the adopted *Chaves County Comprehensive Plan.*	Ongoing (No end date)	County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.

CHAPTER 5: CODE ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
CODE ENFORCEMENT ACTION 1.1: Chaves County shall establish a comprehensive clean-up and community maintenance program that: 1) Utilizes public service organizations, such as NMMI cadets and other community organizations, and prison inmates (accompanied by guards) through court mandated community service, for clean-up efforts; 2) Establishes more dumpster and convenience center sites in accordance with the New Mexico Environment Department regulations; 3) Sponsors a free dumping day once per month at the Roswell Municipal Landfill; 5) Initiates a 'Keep Chaves County Beautiful' campaign that encourages property owners to be more responsible for their trash, take more pride in their properties, and to create a better quality of life for all residents. Coordinate this program with the City of Roswell and other incorporated communities and jointly pursue grant opportunities through the New Mexico Tourism Clean and Beautiful Program; 6) Establishes an 'Adopt a Roadway' program and include signage that recognizes the responsible entity; 7) Installs signs that remind drivers to cover their loads; and 8) Sponsors community clean-up days and public recognition for properties that have been the most improved.	2029-2033 (Medium-term)	County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.
CODE ENFORCEMENT ACTION 2.1: Chaves County shall hire more code enforcement officers and allocate one code enforcement officer specifically to the ETZ. A cost-sharing agreement for the ETZ position should be negotiated between Chaves County and the City of Roswell.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.
CODE ENFORCEMENT ACTION 2.2: Chaves County shall utilize GIS and GPS software to improve and assist in tracking of nuisance properties.	Ongoing (No end date)	Planning & Zoning Dept.

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CHAPTER 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 1.1: Chaves County shall continue to participate with the Roswell-Chaves County Economic Development Corporation (RCCEDC), Southeastern New Mexico Economic Development District (SNMEDD), and the New Mexico Economic Development Department (NMEDD) on local and regional economic development programs, commissions, and initiatives and actions.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; RCCEDC; SNMEDD; NMEDD
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 1.2: Chaves County shall participate in infrastructure planning with the City of Roswell for the ETZ.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.; Public Services Dept.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 1.3: Chaves County shall work with third party organizations to convene business enhancement training forums on a variety of topics, including the following: 1) Customer service; 2) Marketing and customer market expansion for the aviation, manufacturing and agriculture, and renewable energy sectors; 3) Marketing and advertising for retail, tourism, etc.; 4) Local, state and federal technical and financial assistance programs; and 5) Acquiring government contracts.	2029-2033 (Medium-term)	BCC; County Manager; RCCEDC; SNMEDD
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 2.1: Chaves County shall develop a business license program that includes, but is not limited to registration procedures; application forms and checklists; fee schedule; and links to the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department website.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager; Finance Dept.; RCCEDC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 2.2: In conjunction with other amendments to the *Chaves County Zoning Ordinance* identified under Land Use Actions, Chaves County shall add high-tech manufacturing, data centers, and battery energy storage systems to the permissive land uses in the *County Zoning Ordinance* and shall work with the City of Roswell to address those land uses within the ETZ.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.; City of Roswell
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 3.1: Chaves County shall develop a list of specific business/industry recruitment targets. The list will include, but not be limited to: 1) Agriculture-related businesses, including value-added agriculture; 2) Complementary / supporting services for existing manufacturers around the state and region; 3) Manufacturing and distribution centers; 4) Complementary / support industries for healthcare; 5) Complementary / support services for aviation and aviation technology industries; and 6) High-tech industries.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager; RCCEDC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 3.2: Chaves County shall support the RCCEDC's efforts to actively engage in marketing and enhancement activities to promote local businesses.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 4.1: Chaves County shall promote and support new business development and the expansion of existing businesses at the RAC.	Ongoing (No end date)	RCCEDC; SNMEDD; NMEDD
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 4.2: Chaves County shall assess the potential for the following uses to locate at the RAC: 1) Aviation-related industries, including aircraft maintenance; 2) Manufacturing and distribution centers; 3) Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell conference center and student housing; and 4) Workforce housing through rehabilitating onsite housing units.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager; RCCEDC; SNMEDD; NMEDD
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 5.1: Chaves County shall evaluate the potential for locating new commercial and industrial development as illustrated on the *Future Land Use* map.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.; RCCEDC

CHAPTER 6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 5.2: Chaves County shall continue to identify potential sites within the County for economic development and evaluate and prioritize the delivery of infrastructure, roadway access, and determines ownership status and zoning to serve future commercial and industrial development.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.; RCCEDC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 5.3: Chaves County shall coordinate with the New Mexico Economic Development Department's site-readiness program.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; RCCEDC; NMEDD
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 6.1: Sponsor and promote job expos that focus on STEAM technologies, including life sciences, engineering, computer science, natural sciences, etc., that will help encourage young adults in Chaves County to enter those fields.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; RCCEDC; NMEDD
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 6.2: Chaves County shall market and encourage workforce training and workforce investment programs offered by the New Mexico Economic Development Department.	Ongoing (No end date)	RCCEDC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 6.3: Chaves County shall promote a business/school partnership with the Roswell Independent School District, New Mexico Military Institute, and Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell that provides students with effective preparation for existing and future employers.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager; RCCEDC; NMEDD
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 6.4: Chaves County shall continue its partnership with the County Extension Service by promoting agricultural education, outreach, and research-based programs that help producers adapt to challenges, strengthen local agriculture, and prepare for future agricultural opportunities.	Ongoing (No end date)	County Manager; CCCES; RCCEDC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 7.1: Chaves County shall promote tourism in Roswell, Chaves County, and Southeast New Mexico, including outdoor recreation opportunities at Bitter Lake Wildlife Refuge, Mescalero Sands Recreation Area, Bottomless Lakes and Brantley Lake State Parks, arts and culture attractions, including the Roswell Museum, Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art and other local art galleries, and local shooting sports and golf and disc golf facilities.	Ongoing (No end date)	RCCEDC; EMNRD-SPD; NMORD
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 7.2: Chaves County shall promote agri-tourism businesses and activities where visitors can experience life on a working farm or ranch.	Ongoing (No end date)	RCCEDC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 7.3: Chaves County shall support and continue to participate in community events, such as the Eastern New Mexico State Fair, National Championship Air Races held at the Roswell Air Center, Roswell Chile Cheese Festival, etc.	Ongoing (No end date)	RCCEDC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 7.4: Chaves County shall coordinate with the City of Roswell in convening a meeting of local and regional tourism partners and marketing events.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION 8.1: Chaves County shall secure legal standing and require coordination with the formulation of recovery plans of any federal or state listed threatened or endangered species, including any proposed introduction or re-introduction of a species by artificial actions of governmental agencies or personnel to ensure minimal negative impact on the community. Chaves County shall coordinate with the Chaves County Land Council (CCLC), extraction industries, agricultural community, general public, and other governmental agencies to assist with habitat protection plans.	2029-2033 (Medium-term)	BCC; County Manager

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CHAPTER 7: HOUSING ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
HOUSING ACTION 1.1: Chaves County shall create an Affordable Housing Plan that complies with the *New Mexico Affordable Housing Act,* as amended. The Affordable Housing Plan shall be accompanied by an Affordable Housing Ordinance, as required by the *Act.* Consider including the towns of Hagerman, Dexter, and Lake Arthur in this planning effort. The Affordable Housing Plan shall contain, but not be limited to: 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 (zoning and land use development codes), non-regulatory (fees, infrastructure capacity, environmental, land availability, financial), and policy constraints to affordable housing in Chaves County; 6) Goals, policies, and quantifiable objectives to meet affordable housing needs (rental and owner-occupied) within a planning horizon of five years; and 7) Public input.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.
HOUSING ACTION 1.2: Chaves County shall support affordable housing organizations by helping to secure grants, advertising, and other in-kind support. Chaves County government will provide support to affordable housing organizations that are involved in workforce housing and housing that addresses the needs of low income and special needs residents through the following: 1) Identifying grant programs and funding sources available to non-profit and private housing assistance groups; 2) Coordinating with the Regional Office of the Housing and Urban Development Department to identify all community development grants and funding that can be utilized for providing affordable and low income housing; 3) Taking the lead in applying for grants and funding sources and providing these monies to qualified affordable housing organizations; and 4) Maintaining partnerships through coordination, agreements, and memorandums of understanding with affordable housing organizations.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.

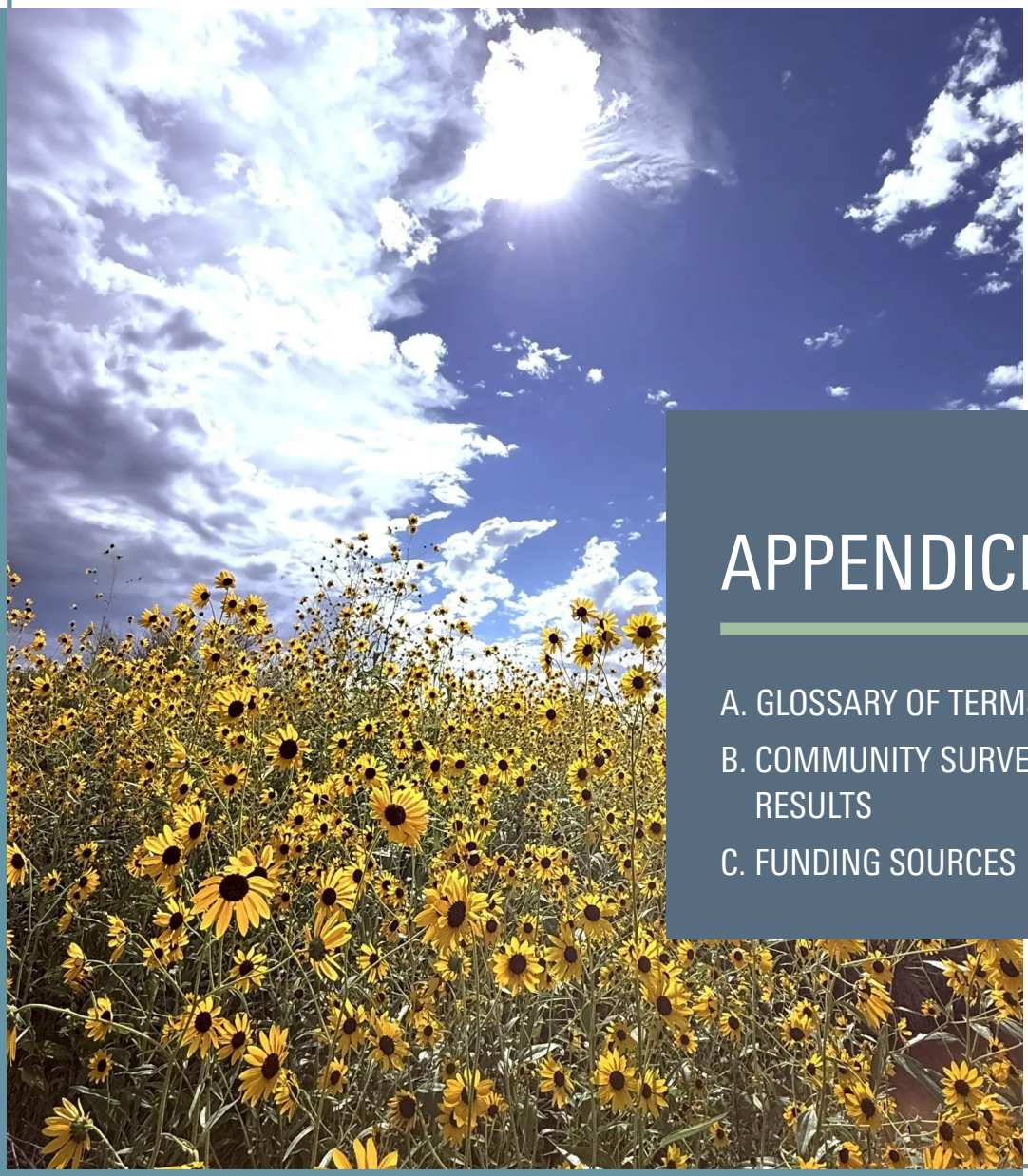
CHAPTER 8: TRANSPORTATION ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
TRANSPORTATION ACTION 1.1: Chaves County shall work with the SERTPO and the regional authorities to improve connector roads from NM 2 to US 285. As part of this effort, Chaves County shall identify and utilize available funding sources for these road improvements.	2029-2033 (Medium-term)	Road Dept.
TRANSPORTATION ACTION 1.2: Chaves County shall re-evaluate intersections and conditions on County roads and take necessary steps to mitigate noted deficiencies.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Road Dept.
TRANSPORTATION ACTION 1.3: Chaves County Road Department shall develop a Traffic Management Plan for County roads in the Pecos Valley, addressing: 1) Daily traffic counts; 2) Techniques to mitigate traffic congestion on County roads and NM 2 and NM 256; 3) Areas where new rights-of-way need to be acquired; 4) Additional or modified traffic control; and 5) Additional traffic routes.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Road Dept.
TRANSPORTATION ACTION 1.4: Develop and maintain a preventative roadway maintenance plan to ensure County roads are adequately maintained and to increase the lifespan of asphalt paving through regular crack sealing, seal coating, patching, hot mixed asphalt over cold milling, etc.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Road Dept.
TRANSPORTATION ACTION 1.5: Chaves County shall continue to work with FEMA and the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to identify mitigation and improvement efforts related to the transportation network and to secure adequate funding for these efforts.	Ongoing (No end date)	Road Dept.
TRANSPORTATION ACTION 2.1: Chaves County shall acquire new rights-of-way in order to complete roadway expansion and improvements, where necessary.	2029-2033 (Medium-term)	Road Dept.
TRANSPORTATION ACTION 2.2: Chaves County shall require adequate right-of-way dedication and improvements necessary to serve proposed development.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Road Dept.
TRANSPORTATION ACTION 2.3: In conjunction with Land Use Action 7.1, update the *Chaves County Subdivision Ordinance* to ensure roadway construction is included as a condition of approval.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Road Dept.

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CHAPTER 9: WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 1.1: Chaves County shall support long-range regional water planning and pursue the implementation of the *Lower Pecos Regional Water Plan* with other jurisdictions and entities with a primary focus on protecting Pecos River water and keeping it in the Pecos Valley.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; Planning and Zoning Dept.
WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 1.2: Chaves County shall work with other federal and state agencies to identify and eliminate invasive and heavy water consuming tree and plant species from the Pecos River Valley. Efforts will include: 1) Contacting the New Mexico Environment Department and soil and water conservation districts to determine what efforts are going on state-wide and how these could be applied to Chaves County; 2) Identifying research methods, funding sources, and seek funding for invasive plant control; 3) Studying the impacts to crops and pastureland from herbicides and pesticides used for control; and 4) Identifying areas of the Pecos River to be targeted for the control of invasive species.	2029-2033 (Medium-term)	Planning and Zoning Dept.; CSWCD
WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 1.3: Chaves County shall require that all new residential development in the County demonstrates sufficient water supply for the development through the subdivision review process.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Planning and Zoning Dept.
WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 1.4: Chaves County shall support the establishment of shared wells, domestic water systems, and the Pecos Valley Artesian Conservancy District's efforts in the metering of domestic water wells and water co-ops.	Ongoing (No end date)	Planning and Zoning Dept.
WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 1.5: Chaves County shall amend the *Subdivision Ordinance* to include provisions to adequately protect the County's water supply.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	Planning and Zoning Dept.
WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 2.1: Chaves County shall monitor the development of sewage treatment facilities in the County and incorporated communities.	Ongoing (No end date)	Planning and Zoning Dept.
WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 2.2: Chaves County shall promote the use of small package sewage treatment systems for residential development and the replacement of old septic tanks.	Ongoing (No end date)	Planning and Zoning Dept.
WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 2.3: Chaves County shall work with the Ground Water Quality Bureau of the New Mexico Environment Department to identify facilities that are not in compliance with liquid waste disposal regulations, identify potential water contamination sources, assist in implementing corrective measures, and provide financial and technical assistance through the Brownfields Program and the Voluntary Remediation Program.	Ongoing (No end date)	Planning and Zoning Dept.
WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 2.4: Chaves County shall support continued improvements and expansion to the municipal wastewater systems within the County.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager
WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 3.1: Chaves County shall pursue the use of produced water and treated effluent for irrigation, land application purposes, roads, non-edible agriculture, and industrial uses, wherever feasible.	2029-2033 (Medium-term)	Planning and Zoning Dept.
WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 4.1: Chaves County shall coordinate with the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management on completing the Rio Hondo and Rio Bonito watersheds engineering study.	2026-2028 (Short-term)	BCC; County Manager; Planning and Zoning Dept.

CHAPTER 9: WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTIONS		
Actions	**Date**	**Responsible Entity**
WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 4.2: Chaves County shall include strategies based on the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management study for flood mitigation and drainage improvements in an update to the *Chaves County Hazard Mitigation Plan.*	2029-2033 (Medium-term)	BCC; County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.
WATER, WASTEWATER, & DRAINAGE ACTION 4.3: Chaves County shall support the Chaves County Flood Commission's role in ensuring the County has adequate stormwater drainage mitigation and facilities and continues to identify drainage issues prior to major storm events.	Ongoing (No end date)	BCC; County Manager; Planning & Zoning Dept.

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APPENDICES

A. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

B. COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

C. FUNDING SOURCES

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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).

Agri-tourism: A form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production and/or processing with tourism to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, or other agricultural business for the purposes of entertaining or educating the visitors while generating income for the farm, ranch, or business owner.

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.

Cannabis: The dried leaves, flowers, stems, and seeds of the cannabis plant. The plant contains THC and is a controlled substance. The State of New Mexico legalized the consumption, sale, and production of cannabis products in 2022.

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.

Extraterritorial Zone: An established area outside of a municipality that allows for zoning and subdivision powers outside of its 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.

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.

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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.

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 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

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.

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.

Housing New Mexico: Housing New Mexico provides financing for housing and other related services to low- to moderate-income New Mexicans. There are 37 state and federal programs administered by Housing New Mexico that provide financing for housing, including low interest mortgage loans and down payment assistance, weatherization, green building and rehabilitation, and tax credit programs. Housing New Mexico partners with lenders, realtors, non-profit, local governments, and developers. All state and federal housing programs are administered by Housing New Mexico, 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.

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.

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Resolution: A formal expression of the opinion or will of an official body adopted by a vote. Unlike ordinances, resolutions do not carry 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.

Value-added Agriculture: The enhancement of the economic value of agricultural products, including crops and livestock, through processing, marketing, and branding to create unique value for consumers.

Wetland: Those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions.

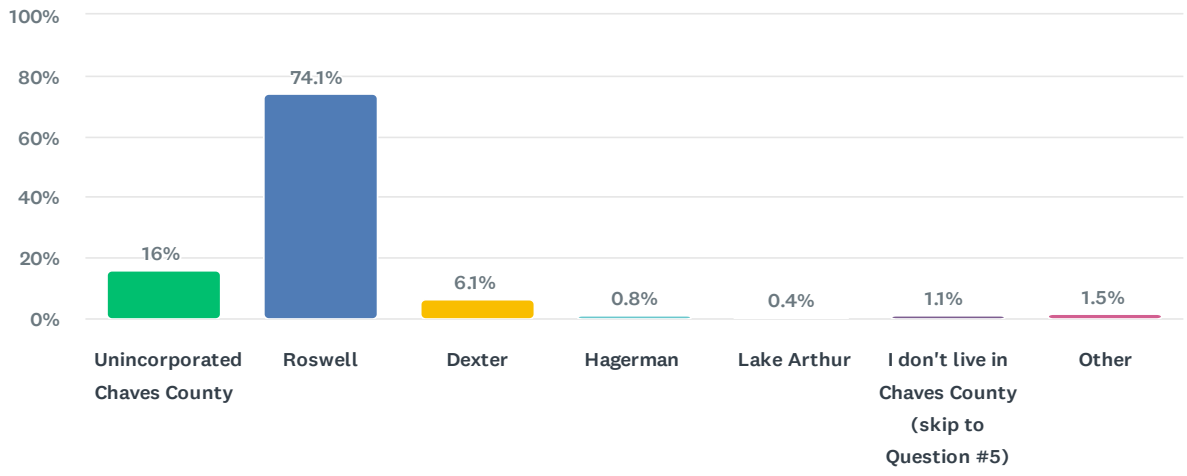
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OVERVIEW

As part of the planning process to update the *Comprehensive Plan*, Consensus Planning designed and administered a Community Survey to gain public input on a wide range of community issues. The Community Survey was available both electronically via Survey Monkey and in printed versions distributed at various locations in Chaves County and at the Eastern New Mexico State Fair. Responses were collected between September 26 and November 7, 2025. A total of 263 people responded to the Community Survey. The survey results are shown in the charts below.

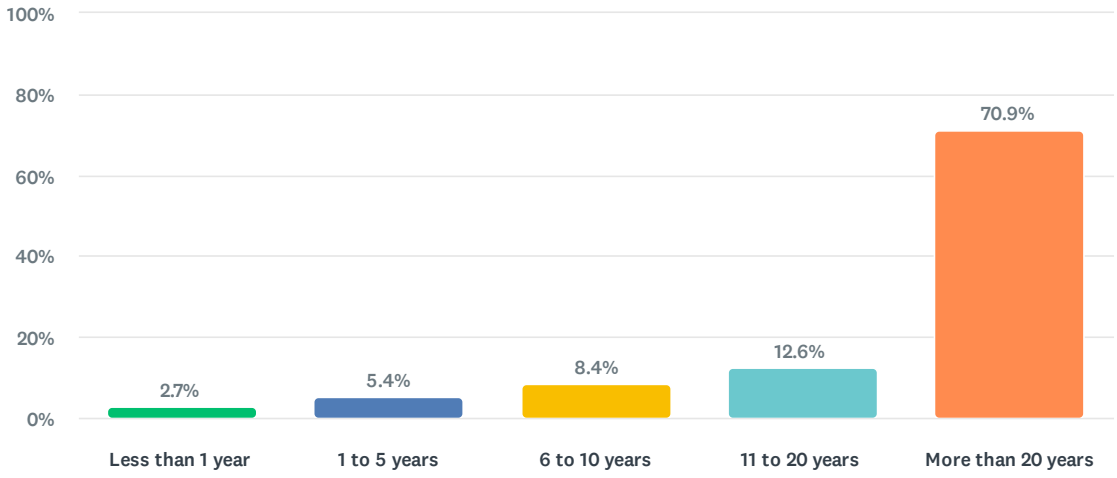
Q1 Where do you live in Chaves County?

Answered: 263 Skipped: 0



Q2 How long have you lived in Chaves County?

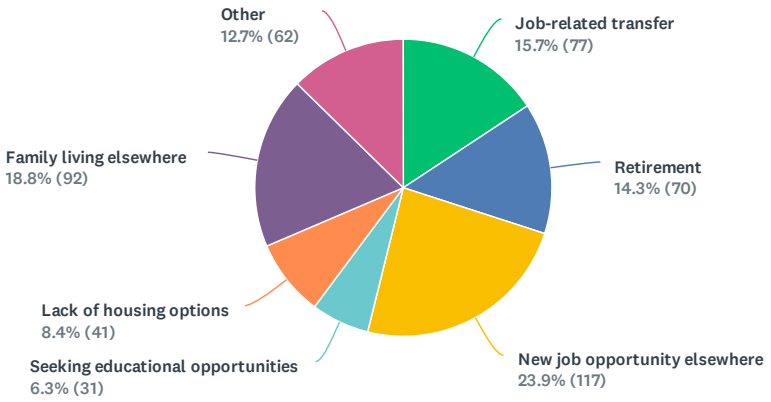
Answered: 261 Skipped: 2



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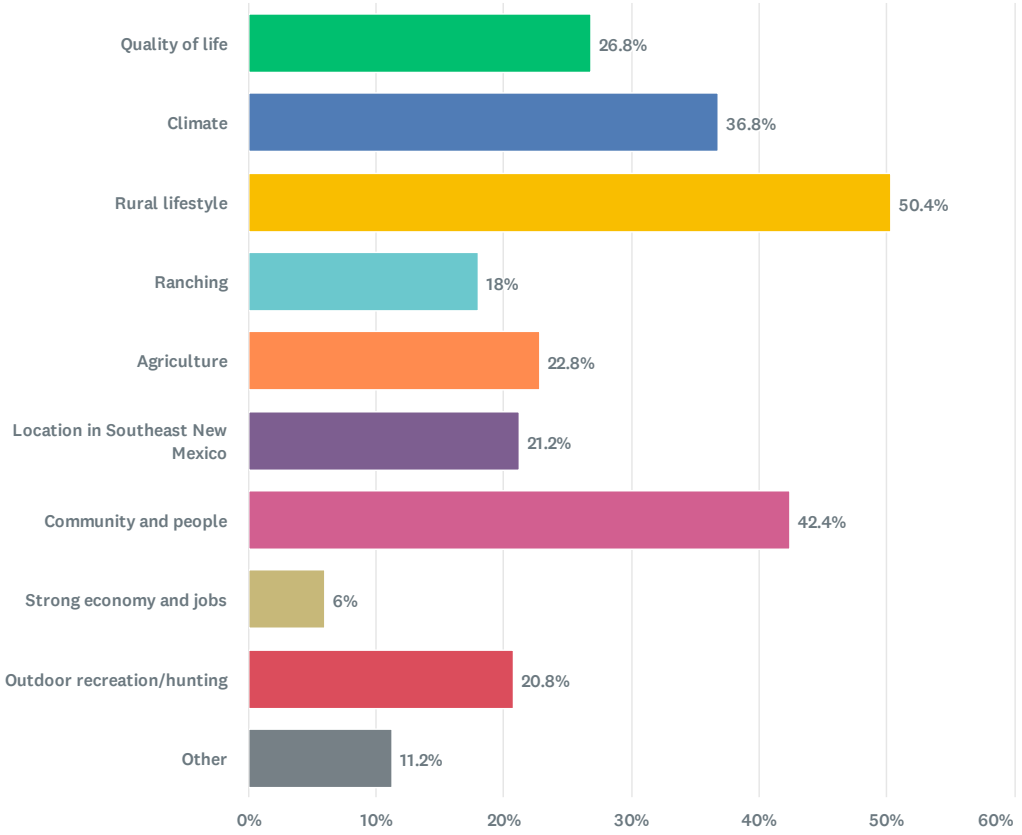
Q3 Which of the following reasons would cause you to leave Chaves County, if any? (Choose all that apply).

Answered: 256 Skipped: 7



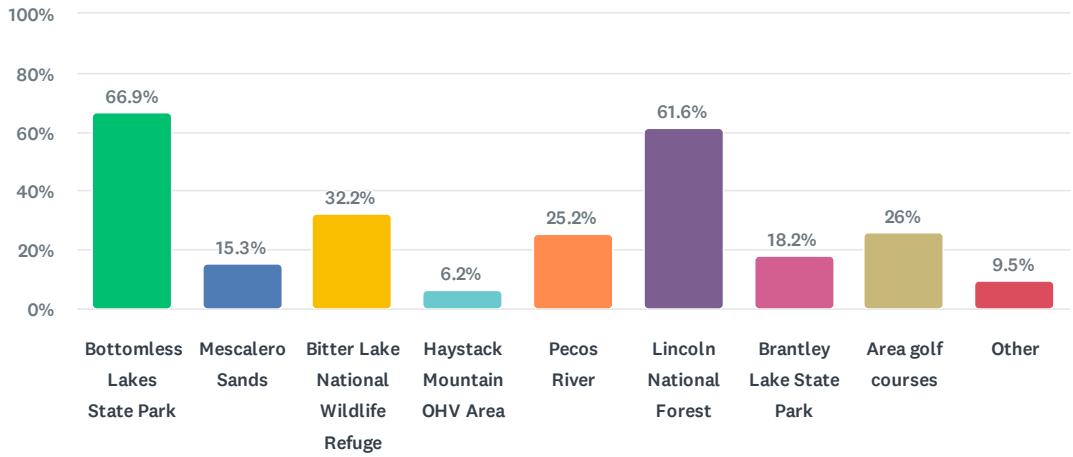
Q4 What is your favorite aspect about living in Chaves County? (Choose all that apply).

Answered: 250 Skipped: 13



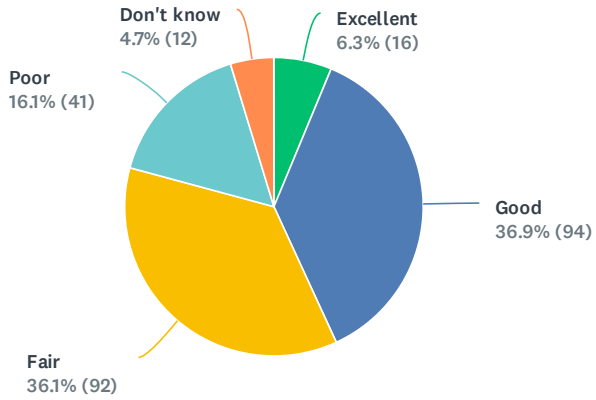
Q5 Please indicate the regional attractions that you or members of your family currently use (Choose all that apply).

Answered: 242 Skipped: 21



Q6 What is your level of satisfaction with public safety services in Chaves County?

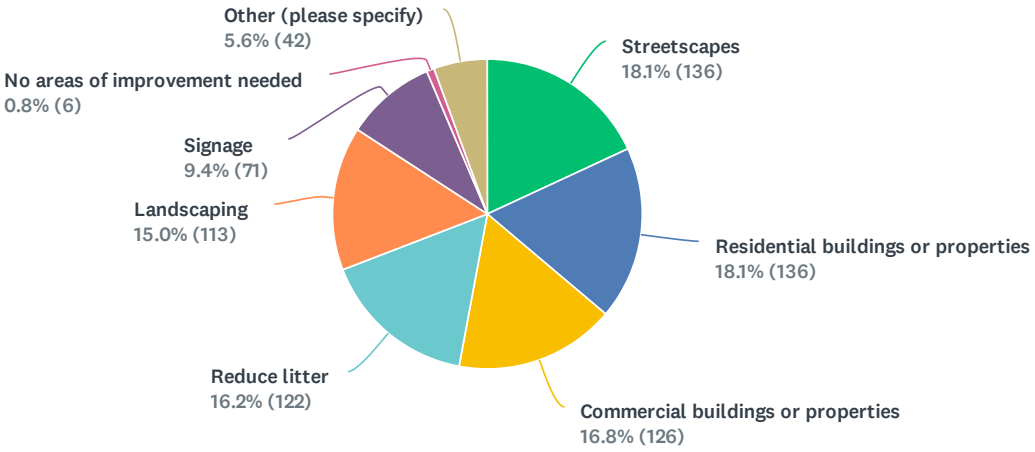
Answered: 255 Skipped: 8



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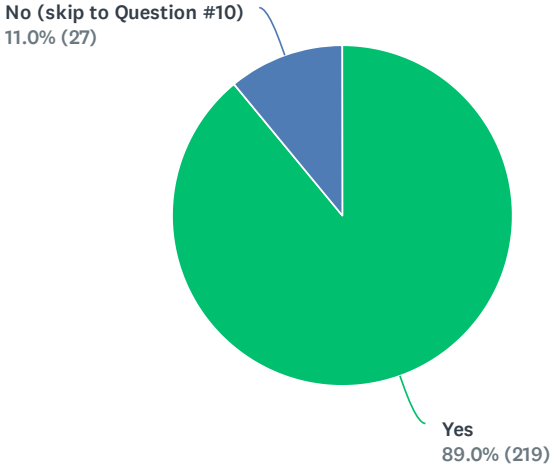
Q7 What areas of improvement to the visual appearance of Chaves County do you feel are needed, if any? (Choose all that apply).

Answered: 254 Skipped: 9



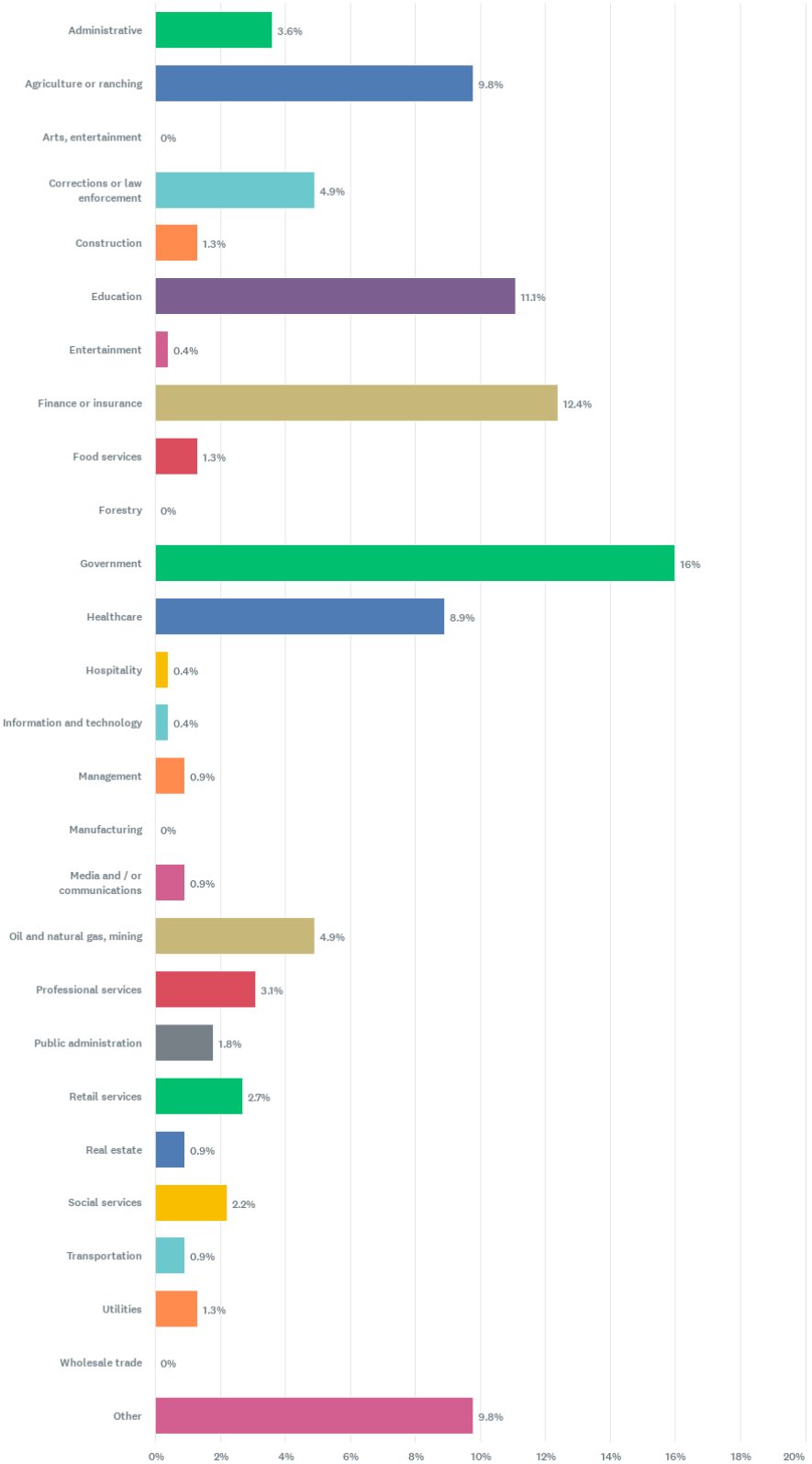
Q8 Are you currently employed?

Answered: 246 Skipped: 17



Q9 If your answer to Question #8 was yes, what type of employment are you engaged in?

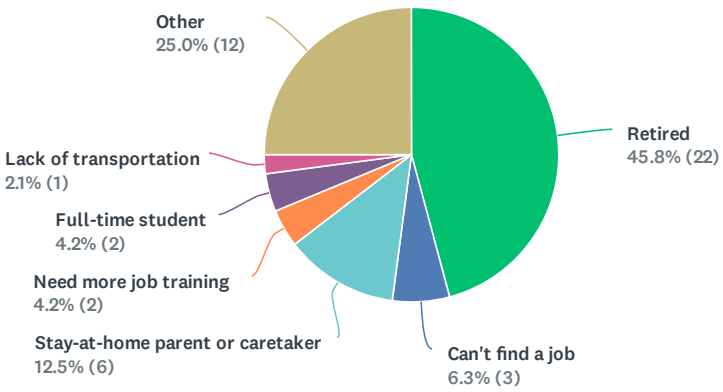
Answered: 225 Skipped: 38



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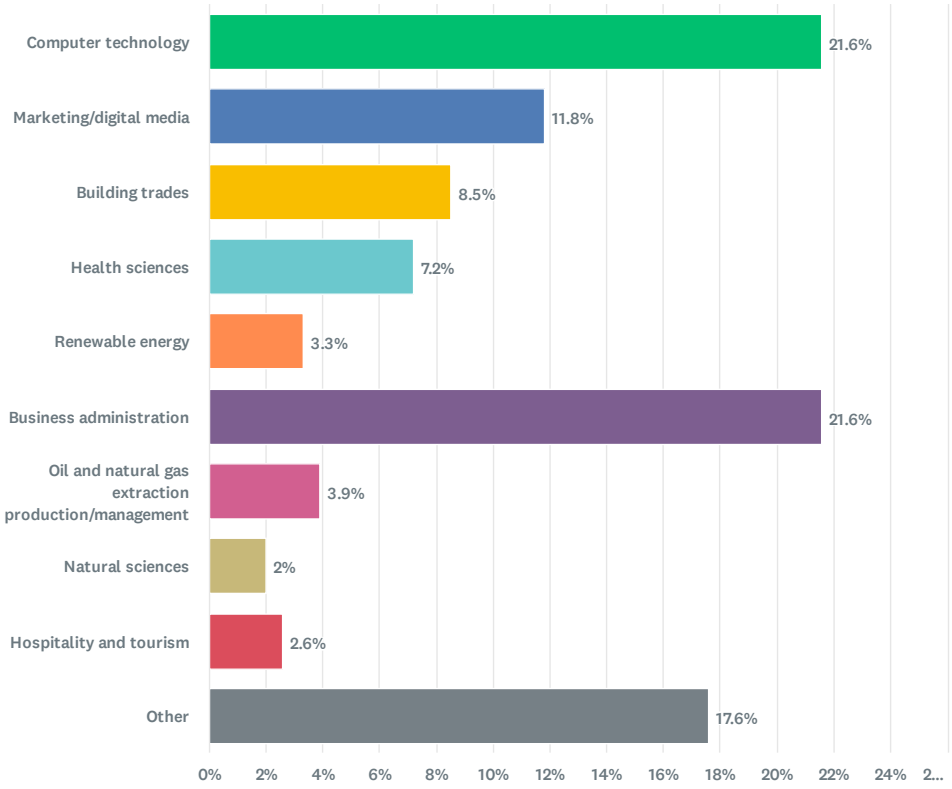
Q10 If you are unemployed, what is the main reason that has prevented you from getting a job?

Answered: 48 Skipped: 215



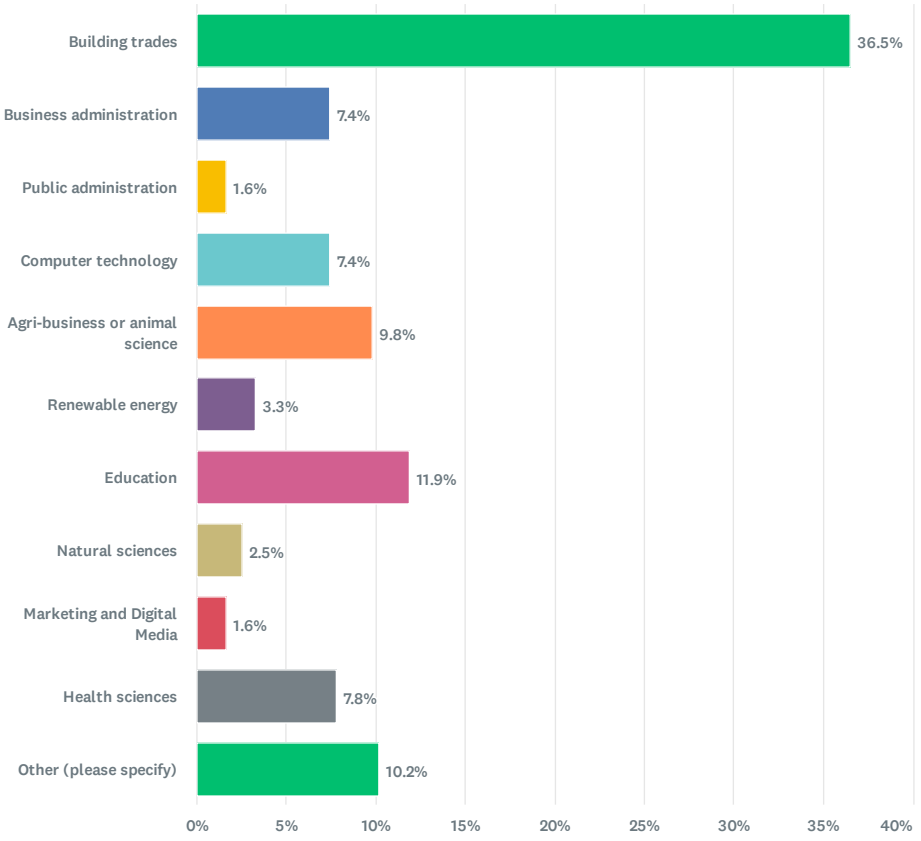
Q11 If you feel like you need more job training, what type of training or education would that be?

Answered: 153 Skipped: 110



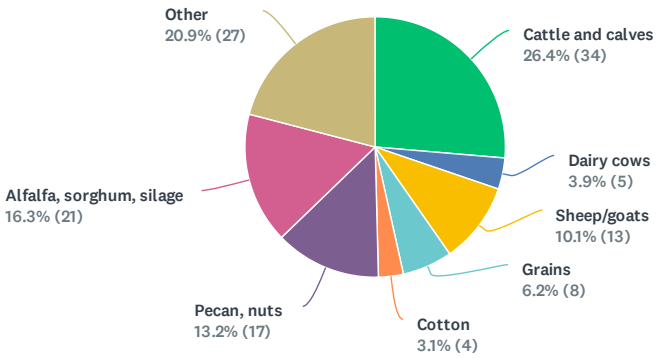
Q12 What types of programs or classes do you think would best serve the educational needs of youth or adults in Chaves County?

Answered: 244 Skipped: 19



Q13 If you are a farmer or rancher, what types of crops or livestock do you grow or keep? (Choose all that apply)

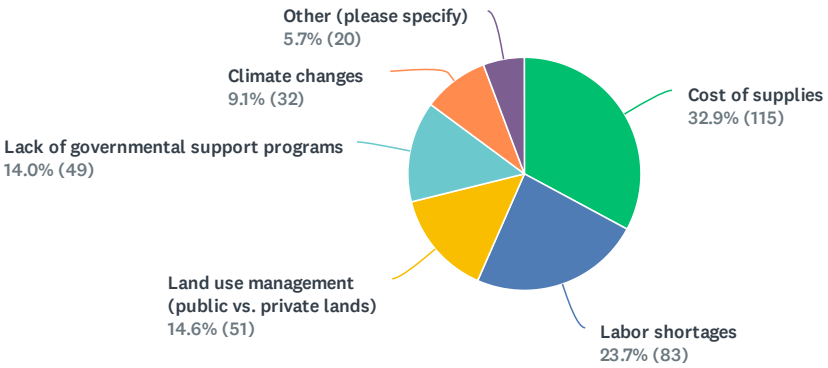
Answered: 81 Skipped: 182



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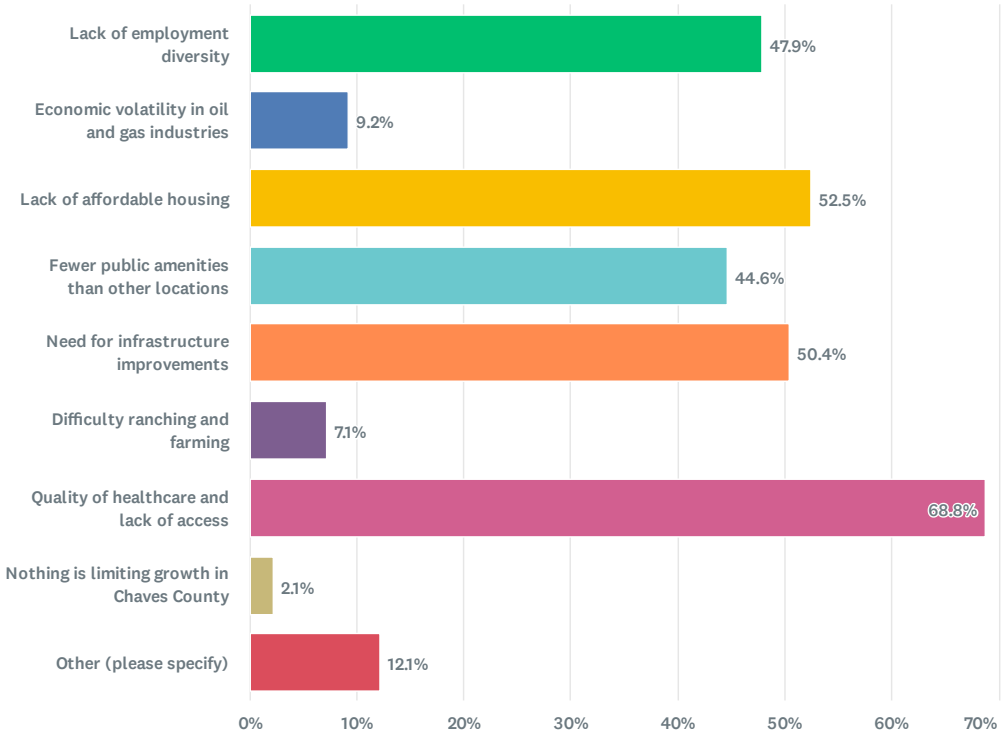
Q14 What are the external factors affecting agriculture and ranching economy in Chaves County? (Choose all that apply)

Answered: 175 Skipped: 88



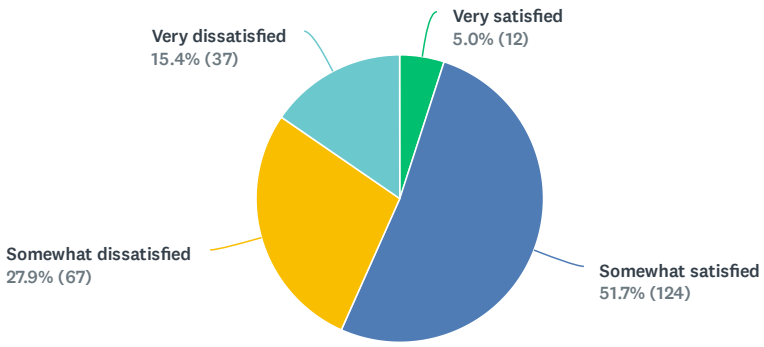
Q15 What, if anything, do you feel is limiting growth in Chaves County? (Choose all that apply).

Answered: 240 Skipped: 23



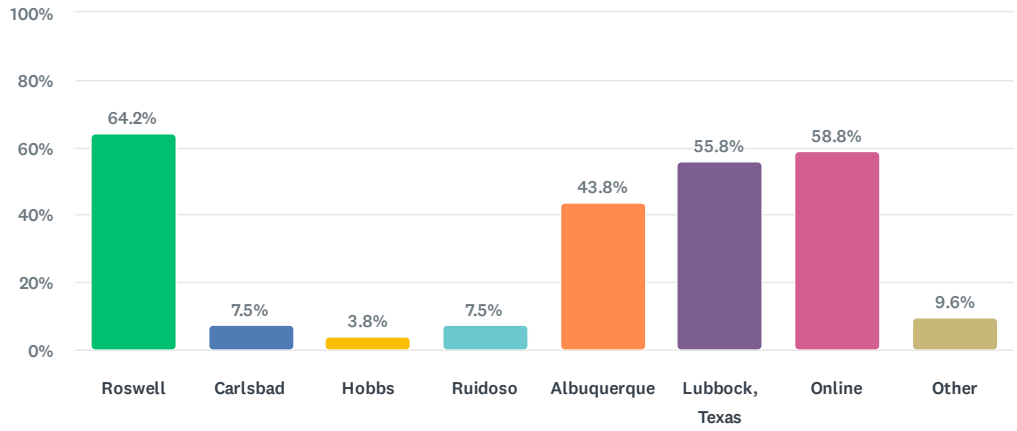
Q16 What is your level of satisfaction with commercial retail and services in Chaves County?

Answered: 240 Skipped: 23



Q17 Where do you go for shopping and commercial services? (Choose all that apply).

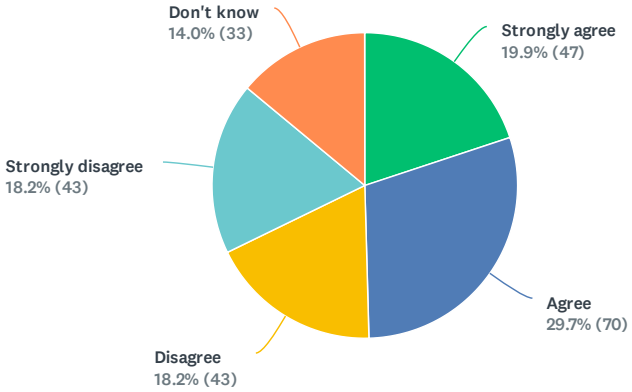
Answered: 240 Skipped: 23



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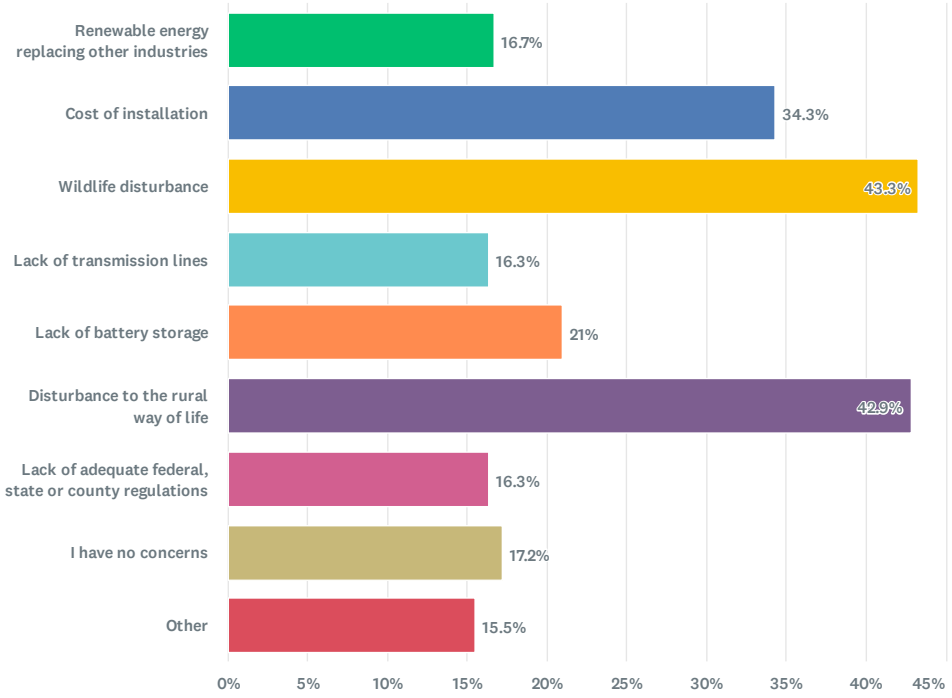
Q18 Should renewable energy, such as wind, solar, and biofuels, be expanded in Chaves County?

Answered: 236 Skipped: 27



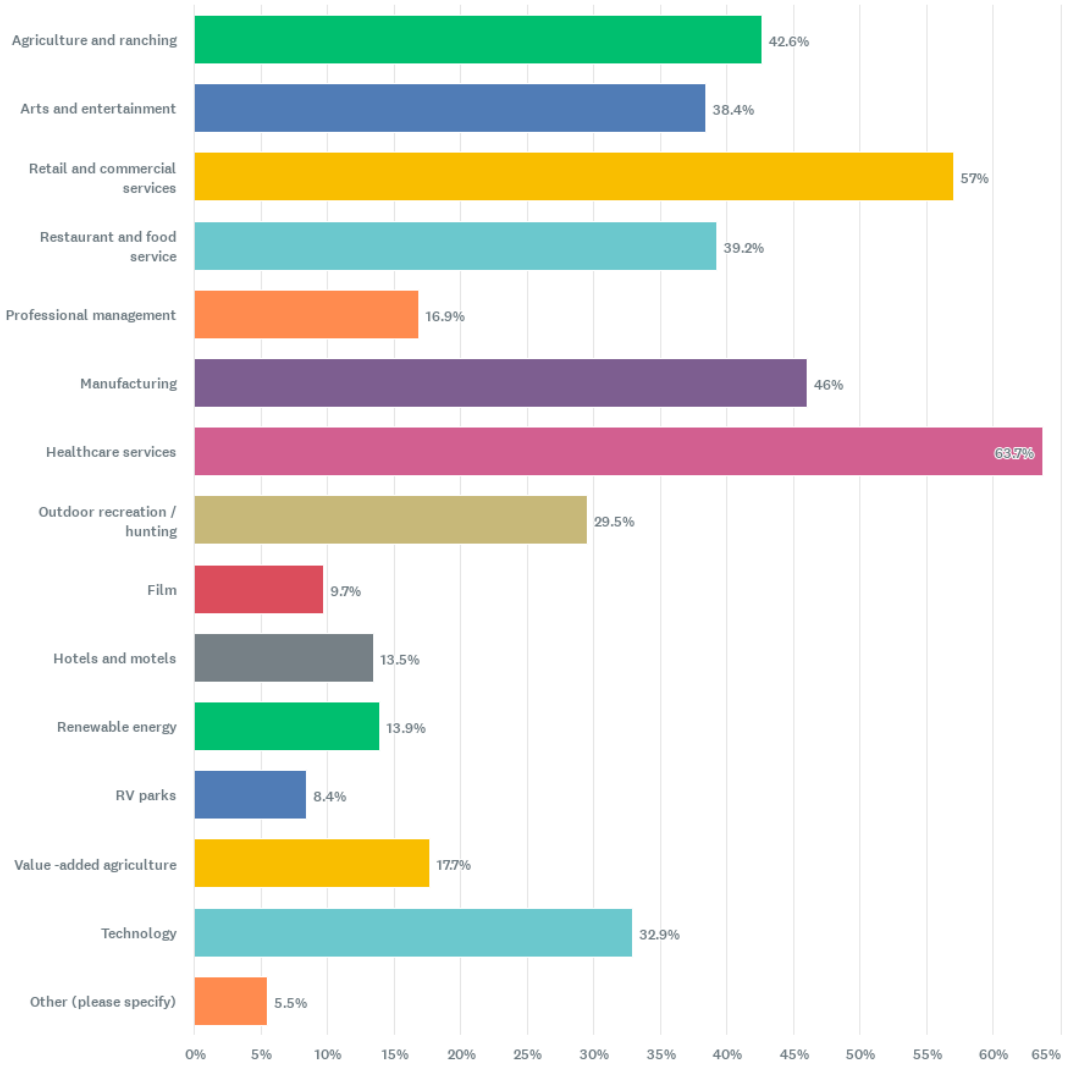
Q19 What, if anything, concerns you about renewable energy projects in Chaves County? (Choose all that apply)

Answered: 233 Skipped: 30



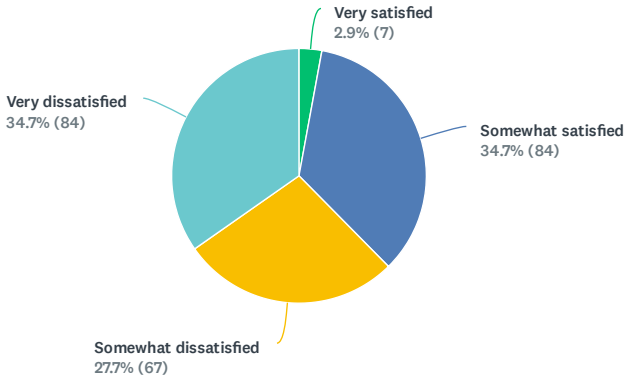
Q20 What areas of economic development should Chaves County focus on? (Choose all that apply)

Answered: 237 Skipped: 26



Q21 What is your level of satisfaction with Chaves County's current roadway conditions and maintenance?

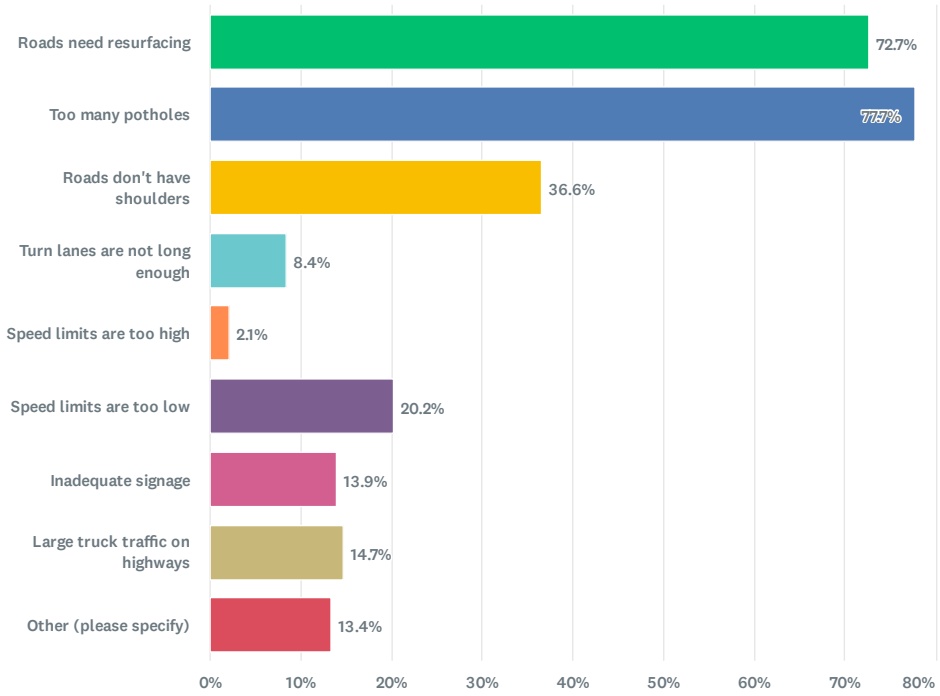
Answered: 242 Skipped: 21



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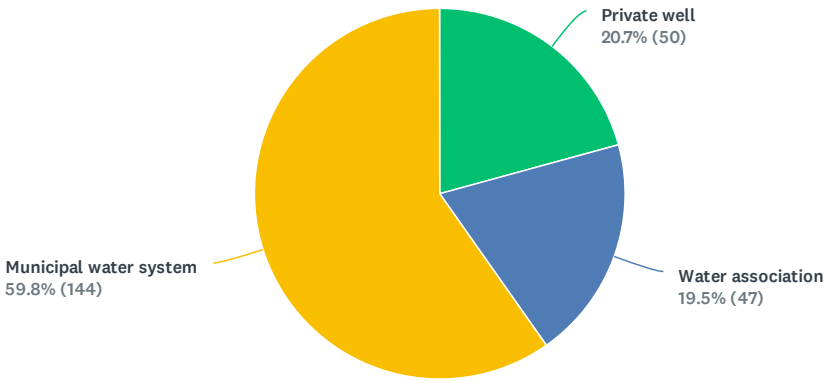
Q22 What are the biggest issues with roads within rural Chaves County? (Choose all that apply).

Answered: 238 Skipped: 25



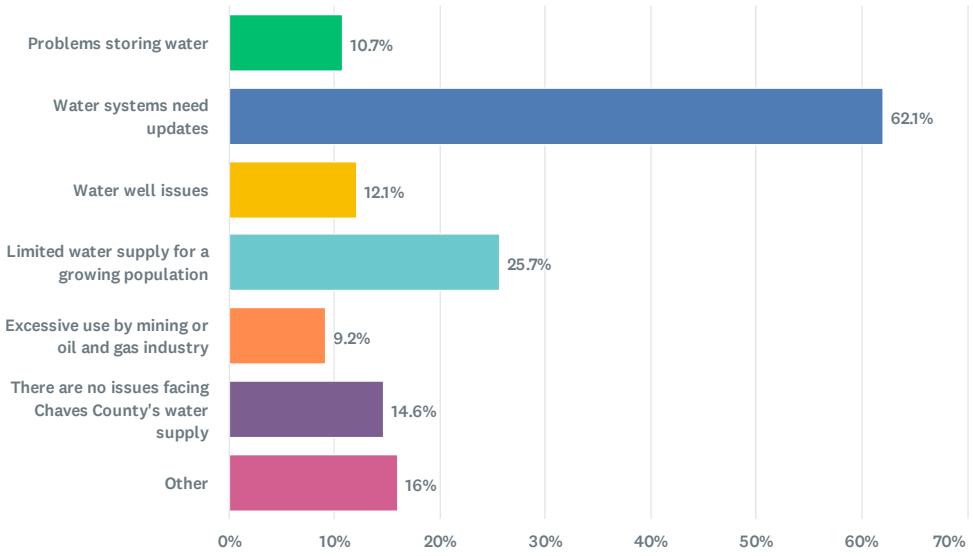
Q23 How do you access drinking water at your home?

Answered: 241 Skipped: 22



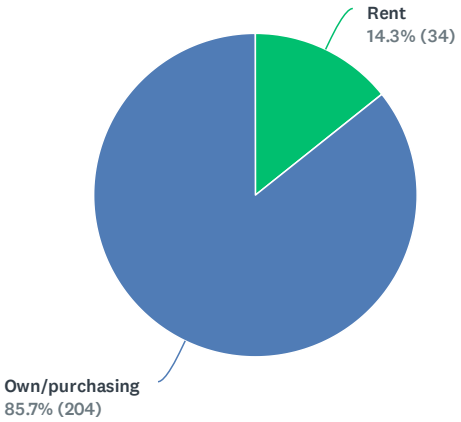
Q24 What, if any, are the biggest issues facing Chaves County's water supply? (Choose all that apply).

Answered: 206 Skipped: 57



Q25 Do you rent or own your home?

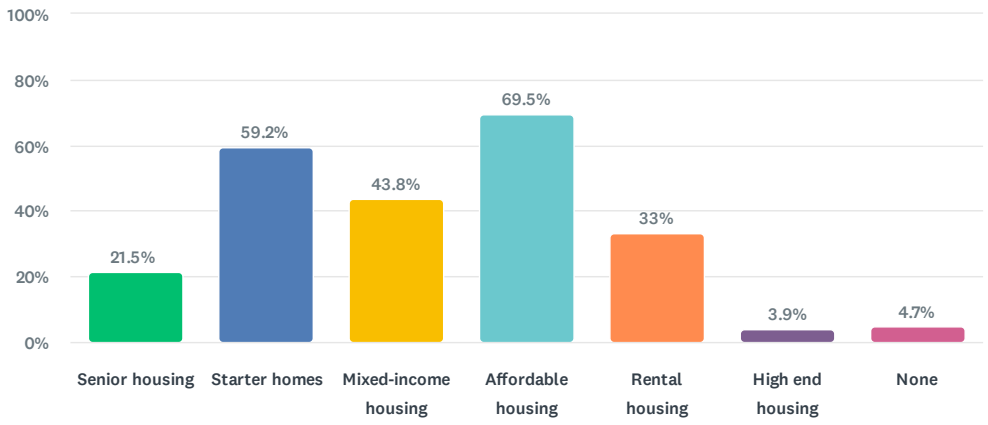
Answered: 238 Skipped: 25



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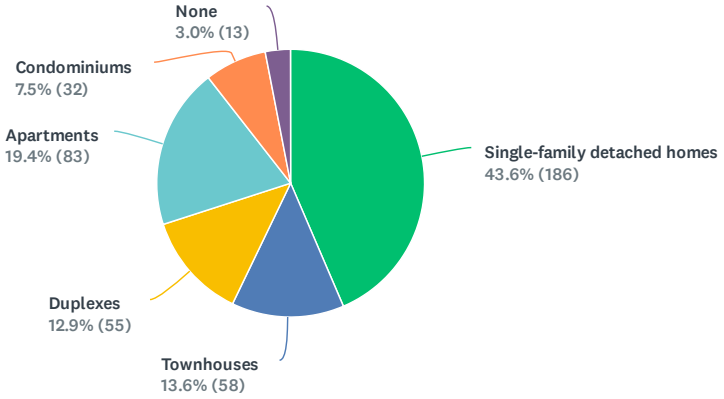
Q26 What housing development types does Chaves County need more of? (Choose all that apply)

Answered: 233 Skipped: 30



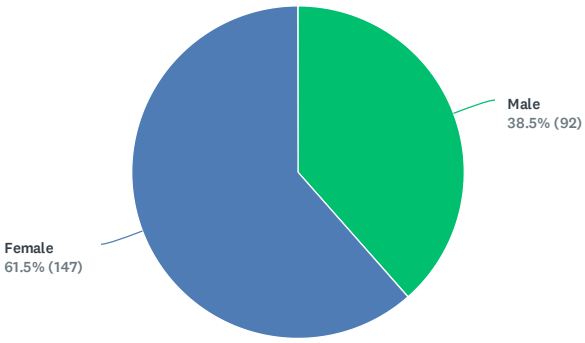
Q27 What housing building types does Chaves County need more of? (Choose all that apply)

Answered: 228 Skipped: 35



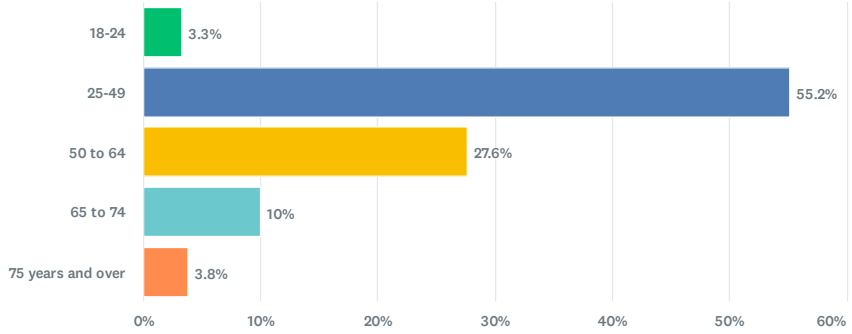
Q28 What is your gender?

Answered: 239 Skipped: 24



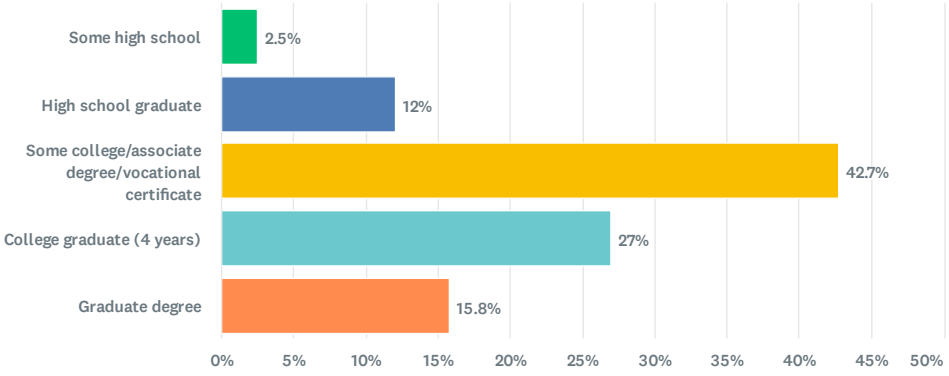
Q29 What is your age category?

Answered: 239 Skipped: 24



Q30 What is the highest level of education you have attained?

Answered: 241 Skipped: 22



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INTRODUCTION

This appendix provides a comprehensive inventory of federal and state funding sources applicable to Chaves County. The programs identified support community development, infrastructure investment, transportation, economic and workforce development, housing, healthcare, education, environmental remediation, water resources, and hazard mitigation. These funding sources are currently active and available to counties, municipalities, special districts, nonprofit organizations, businesses, or eligible individuals, subject to specific statutory and programmatic requirements. Inclusion in this appendix does not guarantee funding; eligibility, award amounts, and availability depend on annual appropriations, competitive application processes, and compliance with program guidelines.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

The Community Development Block Grant program provides federal funding to non-entitlement communities for infrastructure improvements, housing rehabilitation, public facilities, and economic development activities. Funds are administered by the State of New Mexico and are targeted toward projects that primarily benefit low- and moderate-income residents. Eligible activities may include water and wastewater improvements, street and drainage projects, community facilities, and housing rehabilitation.

Contact: New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration
Local Government Division – Community Development Bureau
407 Galisteo Street, Room 202
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: (505) 827-4950
Website: https://www.nmdfa.state.nm.us/local-government/community-development/

NEW MEXICO FINANCE AUTHORITY

The NMFA provides financing at or below market rates with no fees to make it possible for qualified entities in New Mexico to improve their communities. Through its AAA bond rating, the NMFA is able to provide access to low-cost capital to New Mexico's public entities, which offers considerable savings over the life of a loan. The NMFA has a wide variety of loan programs and tools for communities and will work with communities to find the programs that best fit the community's needs, ensuring the lowest possible all-in cost of debt consistent with good credit management policies.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNING FUND (NMFA)

The Local Government Planning Fund provides upfront financing to local governments for planning activities related to infrastructure development. Eligible uses include water and wastewater master plans, conservation plans, economic development strategies, and comprehensive plans. Loans may be forgiven if the resulting infrastructure project is financed through the New Mexico Finance Authority.

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NEW MARKET TAX CREDITS

The New Market Tax Credits program provides loan funds to New Mexico businesses located in low-income areas. In order to be eligible, businesses must be located in a low-income census tract and must be developing commercial, industrial, and/or retail real estate projects (including community facilities) or developing for sale housing in low-income census tract areas. Projects are typically between $5 million and $25 million.

PUBLIC PROJECT REVOLVING FUND

The Public Project Revolving Fund provides flexible financing for public infrastructure projects that may not qualify for traditional funding programs. PPRF is often used for projects with emerging or unconventional revenue streams and can support a wide range of public facilities and infrastructure improvements. The program helps local governments address infrastructure needs when other financing options are limited.

RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE REVOLVING LOAN PROGRAM

The Rural Infrastructure Revolving Loan Program provides financial assistance to rural communities for the construction and improvement of water supply, wastewater, and solid waste facilities. Funding is available to counties and municipalities serving populations below program thresholds. RIP funding supports essential infrastructure improvements that protect public health and environmental quality.

Contact: New Mexico Finance Authority
207 Shelby Street
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: (505) 984-1454
Website: https://www.nmfa.net

NEW MEXICO FUNDIT

The FUNDIT program was created in order to provide local governments' access to simultaneous financing options which saves time, eliminates duplication, improves project effectiveness, and ensures strategic investment with public resources. Projects can include business development such as incubators or industrial parks, community development such as feasibility studies and comprehensive plans, infrastructure development such as capacity increasing, updating or replacing existing facilities and services, housing, and downtown revitalization. The project must be prioritized in the local Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP), economic development plan, or comprehensive plan.

Contact: Economic Development Department
Joseph M. Montoya Building
1100 St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone: (505) 479-2071
Website: https://nmfundit.org

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BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM – NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

The New Mexico Environment Department Brownfields Program assists communities with the assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of properties where real or perceived environmental contamination complicates reuse. The program provides free Phase I Environmental Site Assessments and may offer additional assistance for Phase II investigations, remediation planning, and cleanup activities. NMED also offers technical guidance throughout the remediation process and administers the Voluntary Remediation Program, which can provide liability protections for lenders and future property owners. Funding is supported in part through EPA Region 6 allocations and is available statewide, including Chaves County.

Contact: New Mexico Environment Department
Ground Water Quality Bureau
1190 Saint Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87502
Phone: (505) 827-0078
Website: https://www.env.nm.gov/gwb/RemediationOversight/Brownfields.html

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

USDA Rural Development administers a broad portfolio of loan, grant, and loan guarantee programs designed to support rural communities. These programs fund water and wastewater systems, solid waste facilities, community facilities such as fire stations and healthcare clinics, rural housing, and rural business development initiatives. Additional programs support energy efficiency, renewable energy, and value-added agricultural enterprises. Chaves County generally qualifies as rural under most USDA programs, making these resources a key source of funding for infrastructure investment and economic diversification.

Contact: USDA Rural Development New Mexico Office
100 Sun Avenue NE, Suite 130
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Phone: (505) 761-4950
Website: https://www.rd.usda.gov/nmhttps://www.rd.usda.gov/nm

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY BROWNFIELDS PROGRAM

The EPA Brownfields Program provides competitive federal grants to support the assessment, cleanup, and revitalization of brownfield sites. Funding may be used for environmental site assessments, cleanup activities, revolving loan funds, environmental workforce development and job training, and area-wide planning efforts. The program emphasizes leveraging public and private investment to return under-utilized properties to productive use, supporting economic development, environmental protection, and community revitalization. Counties, municipalities,

tribes, and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply directly for EPA Brownfields funding.

Contact: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20460
Phone: (202) 566-2777
Website: https://www.epa.gov/brownfields

VALUE-ADDED PRODUCER GRANT (USDA)

The Value-Added Producer Grant program provides funding to agricultural producers seeking to increase revenue by processing, marketing, or otherwise adding value to raw agricultural commodities. Grants may be used for planning activities such as feasibility studies, business plans, and marketing strategies, as well as for working capital to implement value-added projects. The program supports local and regional food systems, agricultural diversification, and rural economic development. Eligible applicants include independent producers, agricultural cooperatives, and producer-controlled business ventures operating in Chaves County.

Contact: USDA Rural Development – New Mexico State Office
2510 North Telshor Boulevard
Las Cruces, NM 88011
Phone: (575) 521-8348
Website: https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/value-added-producer-grants

TRANSPORTATION

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (NMDOT)

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) manages a number of state and federal funding opportunities. At both the state and national level, funding programs can change from year to year. The following are not an exhaustive list of funding opportunities, but a highlight of recurring funding. Programs are administered by different groups or units within NMDOT, and there is also the regional District office, who can answer questions.

Contact: NMDOT District 2 Office
4505 W. Second Street
Roswell, NM 88201
Phone: (575) 840-3035
Website: https://www.dot.nm.gov/contact-us/districts/district-2/

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.

COUNTY ARTERIAL PROGRAM (CAP)

The County Arterial Program provides funding to counties for roadway projects in which the local entity takes the lead role in project development and construction. Eligible activities include road construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and repair, as well as right-of-way acquisition and materials procurement. Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis and requires a local match. CAP funding is intended to improve mobility, safety, and access on county-managed arterial routes and is available to Chaves County on a competitive basis.

Contact: New Mexico Department of Transportation
Local Government Division – County Arterial Program
1120 Cerrillos Road
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1149
Phone: (505) 827-1615
Website: https://www.dot.nm.gov/local-government-county-arterial-program/

MUNICIPAL ARTERIAL PROGRAM LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROAD FUND

The Municipal Arterial 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.

TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENT

The Transportation Enhancement provides funding to help expand transportation choices and enhance the transportation experience through 12 eligible 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. Projects must relate to surface transportation and must qualify under one or more of the 12 eligible categories.

Contact: NMDOT State Grants Manager
1120 Cerrillos Road
P.O. Box 1149
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1149
Phone: (505) 699-9946
Website: https://www.dot.nm.gov/business-support/project-oversight-division/ t-lpa-documents-and-information/

RECREATIONAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

Local and tribal public agencies can apply to NMDOT for RTP funding for trails and trail-related facilities for hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrianism, cross-

country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, and off-road four-wheel driving.

TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM

The Transportation Alternatives Program funds street-adjacent sidewalks, non-motorized and paved, shared-use paths, bike lanes, bicycle racks (including for buses), as well as bicycle and pedestrian education for children in grades K-12.

Both programs are recurring, competitive, federal reimbursement programs that can fund up to 85.44% of the eligible project costs, and some project types can be funded by either program. NMDOT typically issues calls for two years of funding at a time for both programs.

Contact: NMDOT Active Transportation and Recreation Programs Group
Website: https://www.dot.nm.gov/planning-research-multimodal-and-safety/planning-division/multimodal-planning-and-programs-bureau/active-transportation-and-recreational-programs/

NMDOT AVIATION DIVISION

The Aviation Division coordinates and administers state grants for improving the aviation infrastructure in the State of New Mexico. It also authorizes the expenditure of money from the state aviation fund for construction, development and maintenance of public use airport facilities. The Division supports and encourages air service to the smaller communities within the state through the Air Service Assistance Program. Any city or town in New Mexico can apply for a aviation-related grant through the Department of Transportation.

AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE OR REMODELING TAX DEDUCTION

Receipts from maintaining, refurbishing, remodeling or otherwise modifying a commercial or military carrier (aircraft) over 10,000 pounds gross landing weight may be deducted from gross receipts.

AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURING TAX DEDUCTION

Receipts of an aircraft manufacturer or affiliate from selling aircraft or aircraft parts, or from selling services performed on aircraft or aircraft components or from selling aircraft flight support, pilot training or maintenance training services may be deducted from gross receipts.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT TAX DEDUCTION

Aerospace services are the research and development services sold or for resale to an organization for resale by the organization to the U.S. Air Force. When R&D services are sold to another corporation for resale to the Air Force, the seller's receipts are deductible. If the R&D services are sold to an intermediary for resale to a corporation for resale to the Air Force, those receipts are also deductible.

Contact: NMDOT - Aviation Division 3501 Access Rd C
Albuquerque, NM 87106
Phone: (505) 795-1401
Website: https://www.dot.nm.gov/ planning-research-multimodal-and-safety/modal/aviation-division/

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BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

DREAMSPRING

DreamSpring, formerly known as ACCION New Mexico, makes loans to small businesses that may not qualify for bank loans, and also provides business support services.

Contact: DreamSpring
2000 Zearing Avenue NW
Albuquerque, NM 871024
Phone: 800-508-7624
Website: www.dreamspring.org

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA)

The EDA provides federal grant funding to support job creation, economic diversification, and long-term economic resilience in economically distressed communities. EDA funding may be used for public works infrastructure, economic adjustment assistance, regional planning, technical assistance, and disaster recovery projects. Eligible applicants include counties, municipalities, regional planning organizations, and tribal governments. For Chaves County, EDA funding can support industrial development, workforce-supportive infrastructure, and initiatives aimed at strengthening regional economic competitiveness.

Contact: U.S. Economic Development Administration
Austin Regional Office
903 San Jacinto Boulevard, Suite 206
Austin, TX 78701
Phone: (512) 381-8144
Website: https://www.eda.gov

EMPLOYMENT ENHANCEMENT TAX CREDITS

New Mexico has a number of tax credits that employers can qualify for by adding employees in the state, including:

- Corporate-Supported Child Car
- High-Wage Jobs
- Investment (for purchasing equipment introduced into New Mexico for use in a new or expanded manufacturing operation)
- Job Mentorship
- Rural Jobs
- Technology Jobs
- Welfare-to-Work

Contact: New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department
1200 South St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87504
Phone: 866-285-2996
Website: https://www.tax.newmexico. gov/tax-professionals/tax-credits-overview-forms/employment-enhancement-tax-credits/

NEW MEXICO ANGEL TAX CREDIT

This tax credit allows for an investor (who files a NM income tax return and is an accredited investor) to take a tax credit of 25% of an investment (up to $62,500 per investment, for five investments per taxable year) for an investment made in a New Mexico company that is engaging in research or manufacturing, given that each investment is in a different qualified business. Any unused portion of the credit can be rolled over and applied for three consecutive years.

Contact: New Mexico Angels, Inc.
1451 Innovation Parkway SE, Suite 600
Albuquerque, NM 87123
Phone: (505) 932-6435
Website: www.nmangels.com

NEW MEXICO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The New Mexico Economic Development Department administers a wide range of programs designed to support business expansion, job creation, and economic growth throughout the state. Funding and assistance programs include infrastructure support, site readiness initiatives, workforce training partnerships, and incentives for business recruitment and retention. EDD also provides technical assistance to local governments and economic development organizations to improve project readiness and competitiveness. These resources may be leveraged by Chaves County to advance local and regional economic development priorities.

BUSINESS INCUBATOR PROGRAM

This program provides a process to certify business incubator facilities in order to receive state support. The primary goal of each incubator is to mentor early stage businesses, provide training, and to provide a space/ location at below-market cost to ensure the sustainability and prosperity of these new businesses. Eligible applicants are entities that have been certified by the EDD as meeting the requirements for a business incubator facility, are owned by a non-profit organization, governmental or tribal entity, and provide services to their clients which contribute to their success and allow them to grow out of the incubator to a job-creating New Mexico businesses.

JOB TRAINING INCENTIVE PROGRAM (JTIP)

The JTIP reimburses a portion of employee wages and training costs for qualifying new or expanding businesses in New Mexico. The program is intended to encourage job creation and workforce development by offsetting initial training expenses associated with hiring new employees. Reimbursement rates vary based on wage levels, job categories, and employee qualifications, and applications must be approved prior to hiring.

STRATEGIC SITE READINESS PROGRAM

The Site Readiness Program enhances the state's capacity to identify, evaluate, and prepare high-value sites for future economic development. Through the Site Readiness Program, eligible sites may receive a detailed site characterization study from Global Location Strategies (GLS), including a GIS and infrastructure review, and an on-site assessment to verify conditions, identify strengths and gaps, and provide recommendations to further site readiness. After participating

in the site characterization study, sites will be included in EDD's GIS map under the "Find Your Perfect Site" tab at the top of the page. The most promising and strategic sites may be recommended for designation by an Advisory Committee and approved for designation by the EDD Cabinet Secretary as a State of New Mexico Strategic Site. This designation means those sites are eligible to apply for grant or loan funding to further prepare the site by funding impactful pre-development needs, identified in the site characterization study.

STATE SMALL BUSINESS CREDIT INITIATIVE

The State Small Business Credit Initiative provides federal funding to states to support small business financing programs, including loan participation, loan guarantees, and venture capital investments. In New Mexico, these funds are administered through the Economic Development Department and are targeted toward underserved, rural, and early-stage businesses. The program expands access to capital, supports entrepreneurship, and strengthens economic resilience. SSBCI resources may be leveraged by businesses and lenders serving Chaves County.

Contact: New Mexico Economic Development Department
1100 South St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone: (505) 827-0300
Website: https://edd.newmexico.gov/#

NEW MEXICO MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

The New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership provides efficiency training, training in and assessment of lean manufacturing, value stream mapping, kata, cybersecurity, lean kaizen, scale-up, advanced manufacturing, automation, problem solving, and leadership to the state's small and medium sized businesses.

Contact: New Mexico Manufacturing Extension Partnership
8600 San Mateo Blvd NE #100
Albuquerque, NM 87113
Phone: (505) 262-0921
Website: 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
- Provide data on key business factors

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- NM Partnership can also assist with agri-business tax credits

Contact: New Mexico Partnership
500 Marquette Ave NW, Suite 710
Albuquerque, NM 87110
Phone: (505) 247-8500
Toll-free: (888) 715-5293
Website: https://www.nmpartnership.com

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
500 Gold Ave SW, Suite 11301
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: (505) 248-8225
Website: https://www.sba.gov/ partners/lenders/7a-loan-program/ types-7a-loans

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

The Small Business Administration provides loan guarantees, disaster assistance, and technical support services to small businesses and entrepreneurs. The programs help reduce lender risk and expand access to capital for business startups, expansions, equipment purchases, and real estate acquisition. In addition to financing programs, the SBA supports Small Business Development Centers that offer counseling, training, and business planning assistance.

Contact: U.S. Small Business Administration
New Mexico District Office
500 Gold Avenue SW, Suite 3201
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: (505) 248-8225
Website: https://www.sba.gov

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
810 W. San Mateo
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone: (505) 984-1454

Email: business@nmmfa.net
Website: https://www.nmfa.net/ business-financing/business-loan-participation-program/

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 where 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 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% and 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
Phone: (505) 243-3196
Email: info@loanfund.org
Website: https://loanfund.org

WESST

The WESST serves emerging and existing small business owners (men and women) in seven counties, including Chaves, Curry, De Baca, Eddy, Lea, Lincoln, and Roosevelt counties. WESST Roswell is one of seven 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: Bank of America Building
500 N. Main Street, Suite 700
Roswell, NM 88201
Phone: (575) 624-9850
Website: https://www.wesst.org/ roswell/

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INFRASTRUCTURE & WATER RESOURCES

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION – WATERSMART GRANTS

WaterSMART grants support water conservation, efficiency, and drought resilience projects in the western United States. Eligible activities include irrigation modernization, water reuse, system optimization, and water management planning. These grants help communities address water scarcity and improve long-term water sustainability, making them particularly relevant for Chaves County.

Contact: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
WaterSMART Program
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
Phone: (202) 513-0570
Website: https://www.usbr.gov/watersmart/

CLEAN WATER & DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING FUNDS

The Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs provide low-interest loans and, in some cases, principal forgiveness for water and wastewater infrastructure projects. Eligible activities include system upgrades, treatment improvements, regulatory compliance, and resilience measures. These programs are key funding sources for maintaining and improving water infrastructure in Chaves County.

Contact: New Mexico Environment Department
Construction Programs Bureau
1190 St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87502
Phone: (505) 827-2936
Website: https://www.env.nm.gov/cpb/

WATER TRUST BOARD

This program provides funding for a variety of water projects statewide. The Water Trust Board provides recommendations to the Legislature on projects to be funded through the Water Project Fund. Awards are a combination of grants and loans. Eligible project types include:

- Water conservation or recycling,treatment, or water reuse projects
- Flood prevention projects
- Endangered Species Act (ESA) collaborative projects
- Water storage, conveyance or delivery projects
- Watershed restoration and management projects

Contact: New Mexico Finance Authority
810 W. San Mateo
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone: (505) 984-1454
Website: https://www.nmfinance.com/water-trust-board/

HAZARD MITIGATION & RESILIENCE

FEMA BUILDING RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES

The BRIC program provides funding for proactive hazard mitigation projects that reduce risks from natural hazards such as flooding, severe storms, wildfires, and extreme weather. Eligible projects include infrastructure upgrades, drainage improvements, wildfire mitigation measures, and mitigation planning activities. BRIC emphasizes long-term resilience, climate adaptation, and cost-effective risk reduction. This program supports Chaves County's efforts to reduce future disaster impacts and strengthen community resilience.

FEMA HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM

The Hazard Mitigation Grant Program provides funding following federally declared disasters to support long-term mitigation measures that reduce or eliminate the risk of future hazard-related damages. Eligible projects may include flood control improvements, drainage infrastructure, utility protection, property acquisition, elevation, or retrofitting of vulnerable structures. HMGP funding allows communities to rebuild more resiliently after disaster events.

Contact: Federal Emergency Management Agency
Hazard Mitigation Assistance Division
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20472
Phone: (202) 646-2867
Websites: https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/bric
https://www.fema.gov/grants/mitigation/hazard-mitigation-grant-program

HEALTHCARE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FUND

The Emergency Medical Services Fund supports the establishment, operation, and enhancement of local emergency medical and trauma services throughout New Mexico. Funding may be used for equipment purchases, personnel training, service delivery improvements, and system coordination activities that reduce injury, disability, and loss of life. Funds are distributed annually to eligible EMS providers through local governments.

Contact: New Mexico Department of Health
Emergency Medical Services Bureau
1190 Saint Francis Drive, Suite N4100
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Phone: (505) 827-3628
Website: https://www.nmhealth.org/about/erd/ems/

HRSA OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH POLICY GRANTS

The Health Resources and Services Administration Office of Rural Health Policy administers federal grant programs that support healthcare delivery, infrastructure, and workforce development in rural communities. Eligible activities include support for rural hospitals and clinics, telehealth expansion, workforce training, and care

coordination initiatives. These programs address healthcare access gaps, provider shortages, and infrastructure challenges commonly faced by rural areas.

Contact: Health Resources and Services Administration
Office of Rural Health Policy
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, MD 20857
Phone: (301) 443-0835
Website: https://www.hrsa.gov/rural-health

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

HOUSING NEW MEXICO

Housing New Mexico (previously named New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority) provides financing for housing and other related services to low- to moderate-income New Mexicans. There are 37 state and federal programs administered by Housing New Mexico that provide financing for housing, including low interest mortgage loans and down payment assistance, weatherization, green building and rehabilitation, and tax credit programs. Housing New Mexico partners with lenders, realtors, non-profit, local governments, and developers. All state and federal housing programs are administered by Housing New Mexico, including Section 8 housing funds and other HUD projects. Some of the primary rental and homeownership programs administered by Housing New Mexico include:

HOMEOWNER REHABILITATION PROGRAM

The Homeowner Rehabilitation Program provides funding for the rehabilitation and essential improvements of homes occupied by eligible income qualified households. Rehabilitation work must primarily focus on items needed to bring the home into compliance with program property standards outlined below:

- Code Compliance Requirements
- Health & Safety Issues & Substandard Conditions
- Structural Requirements
- Sanitation Requirements
- Mechanical System(s) Requirements
- Safety Requirements
- Resource Efficiency and Healthy Homes Standards

Qualified homeowners receive rehabilitation assistance in the form of 0% interest, deferred payment forgivable loan. After the completion of the rehabilitation, homeowner must maintain ownership for a period up to 15 years and is subject to recapture provisions. Household income must not exceed 80% of the Area Median Income adjusted for location and household size.

NEW MEXICO HOUSING TRUST FUND

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 two years (current maximum $3 million). Long term amortizing up to 40 years (current maximum: $2 million). Requirements for rental households are those earning 60% or less AMI. Requirements for single-family households are those earning 50% or less AMI.

PRIMERO LOAN PROGRAM

The Primero Loan Program 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 Loan Program 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.

NEW MEXICO PRESERVATION LOAN FUND

The purpose of this program is to provide a flexible funding source for multifamily properties at-risk of exiting the affordable housing stock, providing opportunities for the preservation of affordable housing in the state of New Mexico. 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.

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. The Ventana Fund is committed to financing affordable housing in low-income communities, economically distressed communities, and market niches that are under-served by traditional financial institutions. Target markets include low-income populations earning less than 80% AMI), tribal communities, rural communities, and CDFI investment areas. The Ventana Fund also focuses on hard-to-finance projects, such as older rental projects needing rehabilitation.

LOW INCOME HOUSING TAX CREDITS

The Low Income Housing Tax Credits program provides federal income tax credits to individuals or organizations that develop affordable housing through new construction or acquisition and rehabilitation. The tax credits provide a dollar for dollar reduction in the developer's tax liability for 10 years. 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. This program is a resource provided by the Internal Revenue Service. 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: Housing New Mexico | MFA
7425 Jefferson Street NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
Phone: (505) 843-6880
Website: https://www.housingnm.org

OUTDOOR RECREATION

LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND

The Land and Water Conservation Fund 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: Midwest Region
National Park Service
601 Riverfront Drive
Omaha, NE 68102
Phone: (402) 661-1588
Website: nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/

NEW MEXICO OUTDOOR RECREATION

The New Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division was created to grow and champion the New Mexico outdoor recreation as an powerful economic engine to grow wealth and job opportunities. The following three funding programs are available:

OUTDOOR EQUITY FUND

This fund aims to support transformative outdoor experiences for New Mexico youth that foster stewardship and respect for New Mexico lands, waters, and cultural heritage. Applicants must be from an area that serves a population where at least 40% of youth are low income. Awards range from $1,500 to $15,000.

OUTDOOR RECREATION TRAILS+ GRANT

This grant funds local and regional projects, with awards ranging from $25,000 to $1 million, with a 1:1 match requirement for urban applicants and 2:1 for rural communities. Funding is intended to support conservation-minded shovel-ready

projects that are open to the public, increase access to outdoor opportunities, and demonstrate a clear economic benefit to the community through improved quality of life, better public health outcomes, and/or increased eco-tourism.

OUTDOOR MARKETING GRANT

This grant program empowers communities and nonprofits to enhance their outdoor recreation marketing efforts, increasing outdoor participation, promoting ecosystem stewardship, and improving access to outdoor opportunities.

Contact: New Mexico Economic Development
Outdoor Recreation Division
1100 South St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505
Website: www.nmoutside.com

ADDITIONAL FUNDING SOURCES

NEW MEXICO CLEAN AND BEAUTIFUL

The Tourism Department offers funding and technical assistance to municipalities, counties, Tribal Governments, and units of government through a competitive grant to support litter eradication, waste reduction, and community beautification initiatives. This grant requires a 25% match. Eligible projects must contribute to the following established goals: End littering; Reduce waste; Beautify communities; Empower youth; and Increase program capacity.

Contact: Tourism Development Department
2491 Old Santa Fe Trail
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: (505) 992-9687
Website: www.newmexico.org

21ST CENTURY COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS

The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program provides federal funding for out-of-school-time academic enrichment opportunities for students, particularly those attending high-poverty and low-performing schools. Eligible programs include tutoring, STEM education, literacy development, college and career readiness activities, and family engagement initiatives. Funds are administered through the New Mexico Public Education Department. The program expands learning opportunities for students and families in Chaves County.

Contact: New Mexico Public Education Department
Student Success Bureau
300 Don Gaspar Avenue
Santa Fe, NM 87501
Phone: (505) 827-5800
Website: https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/student-success/

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COLLEGE ASSISTANCE MIGRANT PROGRAM

The College Assistance Migrant Program is a federally funded initiative that provides academic, financial, and personal support services to eligible migrant and seasonal farmworker students pursuing postsecondary education. The program offers first-year assistance, including academic advising, tutoring, financial aid guidance, and housing support. CAMP is designed to improve college access, retention, and graduation rates for migrant students. Eligible students from Chaves County may participate through the New Mexico State University.

Contact: New Mexico State University
College Assistance Migrant Program
P.O. Box 30001, MSC 3C
Las Cruces, NM 88003
Phone: (575) 646-6086
Website: https://camp.nmsu.edu/