

# Otero County Comprehensive Plan

October 2005

Prepared by:



& Bohannon Huston Inc.



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# Executive Summary

The 2005 Otero County Comprehensive Plan describes the community's vision for the physical development of the County over the next 20 years. This vision has been developed from significant input from County residents and business owners, a Steering Committee with expertise in the various topic areas, and elected and appointed officials. The plan is intended to be used by County officials and staff as a general policy guide concerning the location, character, and type of growth in the community.

The Comprehensive Plan focuses in detail on a number of key elements of the County that pertain to its growth and development, including public and private land use, natural and cultural resources, water and wastewater, transportation, housing, economic development, community facilities and services, and public safety services. For each of these elements, the plan documents existing conditions in the community, identifies issues and future desires and preferences, and presents goals and strategies to bring about the desired development of Otero County.

## Key Issues and Desired Future Conditions

### Government Structure and Capacity

The County is dedicated to increasing intergovernmental cooperation with the local municipalities and with State and Federal agencies. This is particularly important given the regional nature of water supplies and the vast amount of public land in the County.

### Cultural Resources

The County wishes to retain valuable historic material from Otero County and encourage historical artifacts that have been removed to be returned to the County.

### Natural Resources

Otero County seeks to balance the sustainable use of its natural resources, both for products and recreation, while conserving them for future generations.

### Public Land

The plan addresses in detail the County's policies regarding public lands. Based on its custom and culture, the County supports the continuous multiple use of Federal lands and resources and seeks to play a major role in the decisions regarding public land use. The chapter summarizes the major legislation in this area and the opportunities for County input and control. It incorporates policies from the Interim Public Land Use Plan.

### Housing

The County would like to see the existing housing stock and existing infrastructure fully utilized before constructing new housing on open land. To that end, it intends to promote rehabilitation of existing housing, encourage development of new housing affordable to moderate income families, promote homeownership, and cooperate with the municipalities to encourage infill housing development.

## **Economic Development**

The County will pursue policies that will make full use of and build upon the strengths of its Federal entities such as Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range, while continuing to diversify its economy with nongovernmental businesses and industries. It will continue to promote a high level of education for its workforce and creation of good jobs with attractive salaries for residents of all ages. Tourism will continue to play a major role in the economy and filmmaking would become an established sector.

## **Community Facilities and Services**

The County would like to establish a community gathering center in every community with at least 500 people and will explore joint use of fire stations and other facilities. Making medical services more readily available to County residents and providing more recreational opportunities are other goals. The County will also work to expand library services to residents and to support establishment of a non-profit visual and performing arts program.

## **Water, Wastewater and Other Infrastructure**

The County will continue to work diligently to ensure a sufficient water supply to meet the future water needs of its residents through regional coordination, watershed management, desalination projects, water conservation and other policies. It will monitor wastewater disposal to see whether collection and treatment systems may be needed in the future and to promote re-use of graywater. Expanding the existing solid waste collection capacity and improving storm water drainage are also goals.

## **Transportation**

The County will continue to pave and repair existing roadways. It will focus more on planning an efficient network of streets and roadways to allow for a smooth flow of traffic and provide for safe access to arterial streets and at railroad crossings. In addition, public transportation between communities and creation of bicycle lanes will be encouraged.

## **Fire Protection, Emergency Medical Services, Law Enforcement**

The County will work toward increasing the numbers of firefighters and emergency medical technicians in the future by expanding the opportunities for training and working toward compensation for hours spent rendering service. The County will continue upgrading the entire County radio communications system and also seek to improve the insurance ratings of existing County fire departments.

## **Private Land Use**

The County will continue to protect the rights of private property owners and to make sure that the interests of Otero County residents are included in all decisions regarding the use of Federally and State-owned lands. It also seeks to ensure orderly and appropriate growth in the County, while protecting individual property rights, and ensure that the mission of Holloman AFB, which contributes significantly to the economy, is not jeopardized by incompatible growth. Providing for sustainable land use to maintain the custom and culture of its citizens is another goal.

# 1. Introduction

## A. Comprehensive Plan Purpose and Authority

A comprehensive plan is designed to draw on citizen values and opinions as well as data about existing and future population and economic growth to help shape how a county or municipality will look and develop over the next 20 to 30 years. It is adopted by a local government to guide decisions primarily about the physical development of a community. It analyzes current conditions and sets future goals and policies in such areas as land use, housing, roads, water supply and use, natural resources and economic development.

New Mexico statutes enable county planning commissions to carry out and promote county planning. This includes making reports and recommendations for the planning and development of the county as well as recommendations for public improvements to county officials. Comprehensive plans serve these purposes. While there is no statutory description of what elements should be in a comprehensive plan, it may address streets and other infrastructure, parks and playgrounds, floodways, airports, public schools and other buildings, public utilities, community centers and replanning of blighted districts. To be in effect, it must be adopted by resolution by the governing authority after at least one public hearing.

The Comprehensive Plan will be reviewed periodically to monitor progress on implementation. In addition, the Plan will be revised in response to changing conditions. The plan will be reviewed every five years, and changes will be maintained in an appendix. A complete revision will be at the discretion of future commissions.

Otero County undertook this comprehensive planning process in 2004. The aim was to update the existing comprehensive plan, which had been in use since 1973. Since 1973, several documents were produced that addressed issues central to the comprehensive plan. These included the draft Interim Land Use Policy Plan developed by the County Public Land Use Advisory Committee (PLUAC), which addresses public land, private property rights, and Otero County's customs and culture; and the Draft 1998 Otero County Comprehensive Plan Goals and related material developed in conjunction with New Mexico State University. The current plan used goals and objectives from those plans as a starting point from which to make revisions. It also incorporated relevant information from both the Alamogordo Comprehensive Plan (2000) and the Tularosa Comprehensive Plan (2001). Finally, it drew on the Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (2004), which analyzed the effects of noise and aircraft accident potential on existing and proposed development around Holloman Air Force Base and made land use compatibility recommendations. The resulting plan draws on ideas and recommendations from the previous drafts and supplements them with quantitative and qualitative research and additional recommendations to create a document endorsed by the citizens of Otero County as well as the State of New Mexico.

## B. Planning Process

The planning process was guided by substantial input from a Steering Committee composed of representatives from the various communities in the County, including the municipalities as well as Holloman Air Force Base, the USDA Forest Service, and New Mexico State University. County Commissioner Doug Moore was an active participant as well. The planning team held four meetings with the Steering Committee to explore the major issues in the County and develop initial

goals. In addition, the team held one meeting with the general public to elicit what residents valued and felt were the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in Otero County. The team also met or spoke with key leaders in the community to obtain detailed information on specific topics.

Draft chapters were posted on a project website for steering committee members to review. Their comments were then incorporated into a final draft of the comprehensive plan, which was distributed to select facilities in the County for public review. The Otero County Commission held one public meeting to take public comments on the final draft and an open work session to decide which comments to incorporate. They approved the final plan at the regularly scheduled commission meeting on September 27, 2005.

## **C. Plan Overview**

The Otero County Comprehensive Plan is organized into chapters that encompass the broad range of community functions, or plan elements. These include 1) Introduction, 2) Otero County Profile (location, demographics, government structure), 3) History, 4) Cultural Resources, 5) Natural Resources, 6) Public Lands, 7) Housing, 8) Economic Development, 9) Community Facilities and Services, 10) Water Supply, 11) Storm Water Drainage, 12) Wastewater, 13) Solid Waste Management, 14) Other Utilities Infrastructure, 15) Transportation, 16) Fire Protection, Emergency Medical Services, Law Enforcement, and 17) Private Land Use. Chapters discuss existing conditions, issues, and presents future goals and strategies and suggestions for implementation.

## 2. Otero County Profile

### A. Location and Description

Otero County is located midway along New Mexico's southern border with Texas. Established in 1899, it was carved out of the adjacent counties of Lincoln and Dona Ana. The County was named after Miguel A. Otero, who was appointed by President McKinley in 1897 and was the first Hispanic to serve as governor. (See Figure 2-1).

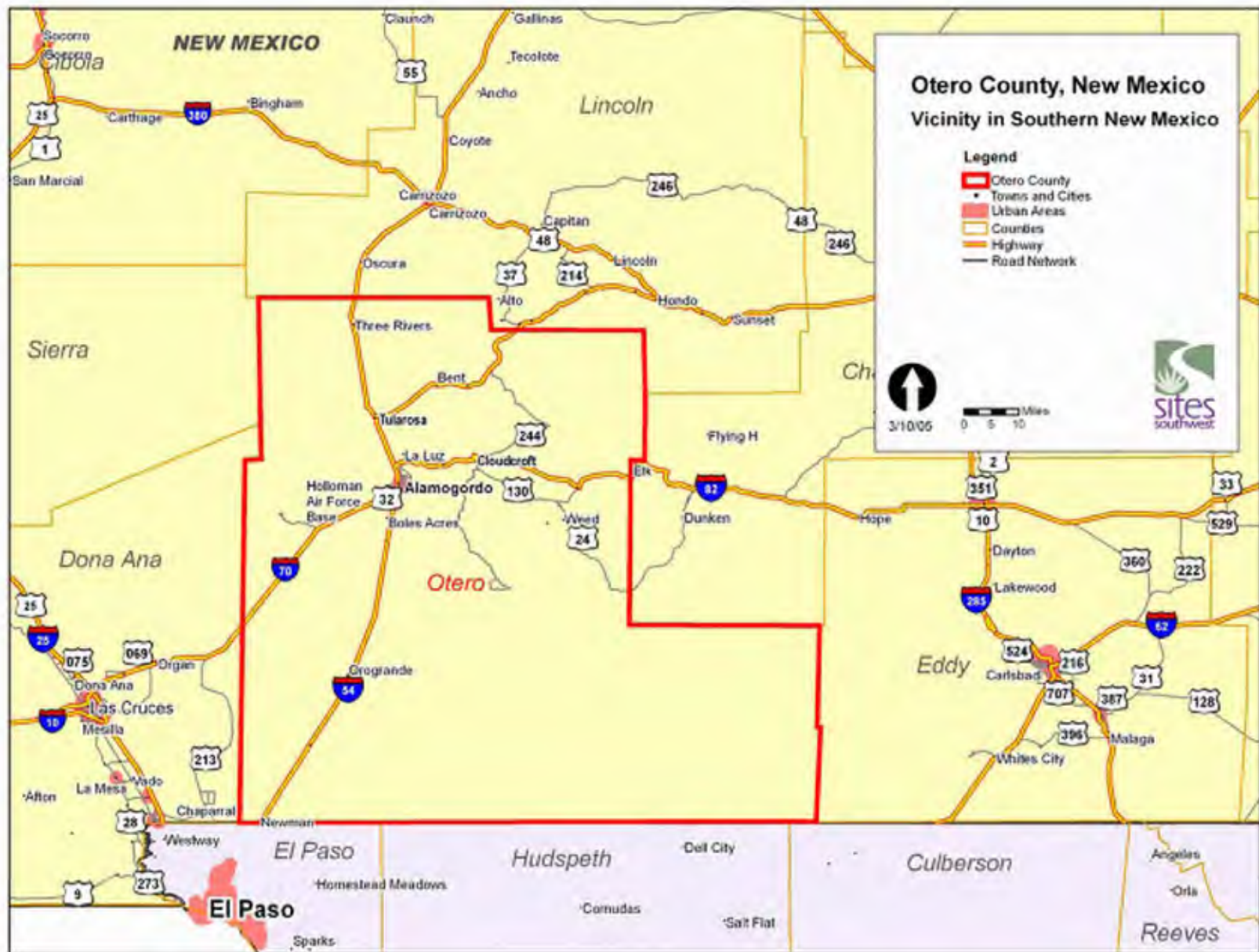
The County encompasses nearly 4.3 million acres, of which 11 percent are privately owned. Because the majority of land is owned by the US government (68 percent) and State government (10 percent), the County's economy is dependent on business activities on those lands. The nature and intent of Otero County's land use planning is to protect the custom and culture of County citizens by protecting private property rights, facilitating a free market economy, and establishing a process to ensure self-determination at the County level by local communities and individuals.

Otero County comprises three incorporated municipalities—Alamogordo, Tularosa, and Cloudcroft—as well as the communities of Bent, High Rolls/Mountain Park, Holloman Air Force Base, La Luz, Mayhill, Mescalero, Orogrande, Pinon, Sacramento, Sunspot, Timberon, and Weed.

Alamogordo, the largest community in Otero County and the County seat, was founded in 1898 as a terminal for the railroad and had a population of more than 35,852 in the 2000 Census. Tularosa had 2,864 residents and Cloudcroft had 749 residents during the same Census year. In addition, Holloman Air Force Base, a major economic force in Alamogordo and the entire County for many years, employed 6,603 personnel and housed approximately 3,526 on the base in Fiscal 2004.

US Routes 54, 70, 82 and NM 24 are the principal roadways that serve the county. The main public airport is in Alamogordo, although Timberon also has a small airstrip owned by the County. From Alamogordo, the nearest metropolitan centers are Las Cruces, 68 miles to the southwest, and El Paso, Texas, 85 miles to the south and adjacent to the Mexican border. Albuquerque, the largest city in New Mexico, is 208 miles to the northwest, while Santa Fe, the State capital, is 221 miles to the north.

Figure 2-1. Location Map



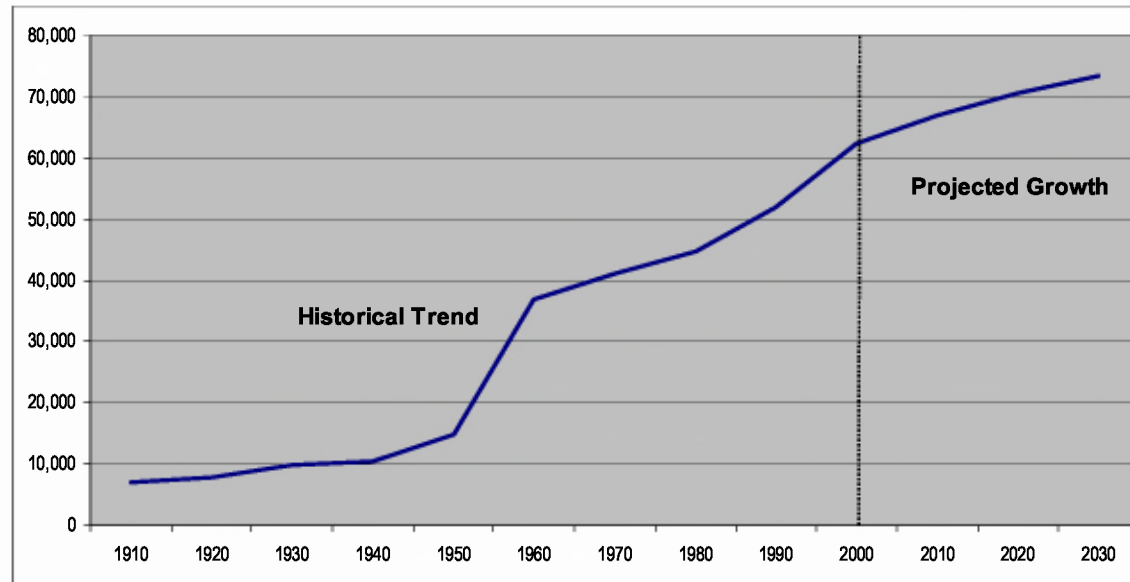


## B. Otero County Demographics

### 1. Historical Population Trend

Otero County had a population of just over 7,000 in 1910. As shown in Figure 2-2, the County grew on average between 8 and 24 percent each decade after that with two exceptions: between 1940 and 1950 when the population expanded by 42 percent, and between 1950 and 1960 when it more than doubled in size (148 percent). It was during these decades that US military operations in the area were expanding and bringing many more residents to the County. As these operations have been downsizing over the past several years, the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at the University of New Mexico projects that the population growth rate will be 4 to 5 percent a decade from 2010 to 2030 (US Census 2000 and BBER 2005).

**Figure 2-2. Historic and Projected Population Growth**



Source: US Census, UNM Bureau of Business and Economic Research

## 2. Present Population Characteristics

The population of Otero County grew from 44,665 in 1980 to 52,034 in 1990 and further increased to 62,298 in 2000 according to the US Census. The increase from 1990 to 2000 represents an average annual increase of 1.8 percent. The estimated population since 2000 was 61,533 in 2001; 61,678 in 2002; 62,058 in 2003; and 63,282 as of July 1, 2004 (BBER April 2005). Statewide, population grew from 1990 to 2000 at the same average annual rate of 1.8 percent (US Census Bureau 2000). Table 2-1 below shows population in 1980, 1990 and 2000 for the County and its incorporated municipalities as well as for the State.

As shown in the Population Density map (Figure 2-3), the majority of the population is concentrated around the Alamogordo and Tularosa corridor. Fewer people are scattered on private land in the western half of the County.

**Table 2-1. Population in 1980, 1990 and 2000**

	1980 Population	1990 Population	2000 Population
Otero County	44,665	51,928	62,298
Alamogordo	24,024	27,986	35,582
Tularosa	2,536	2,753	2,864
Cloudcroft	521	612	749
Holloman AFB	7,245	5,891	2,076
Unincorporated County	12,339	14,686	21,027
New Mexico	1,303,303	1,515,069	1,819,046

Source: US Census Bureau

The median age of people in Otero County in 2000 was 33.8 years, slightly lower than the statewide figure of 34.6 years. In Alamogordo, the median age was 33.5 years, slightly younger than the countywide figure. In Otero County, people younger than 20 comprised 32.1 percent of the total population which is slightly higher than the statewide figure of 31.1 percent. Alamogordo had a slightly lower population under 20 years of age – 31.2 percent. The percentage of people 65 years old and older in Otero County was 11.7 – identical to the statewide figure of 11.7 percent. Alamogordo had a slightly higher figure with 12.7 percent of the population aged 65 or older.

In Otero County 41.5 percent of the total population was White non-Hispanic, 32.2 percent was Hispanic, 3.9 percent was Black or African American, 5.8 percent was American Indian or Alaskan Native, 1.2 percent was Asian, 0.1 percent was Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 11.7 percent was described within the Census categories as “some other race”, and 3.6 percent was two or more ethnicities. The characteristics of Alamogordo were similar -- 43.4 percent of the population was White non-Hispanic and 32.0 percent was Hispanic, while the remaining 26.4 percent was either non-White, non-Hispanic or multiple ethnicities. Both Otero County and Alamogordo have lower rates of Hispanic ethnicity than New Mexico overall, which had 42.1 percent.

The 2000 average household size in Otero County was 2.66 persons, which is slightly higher than the Alamogordo average of 2.57 persons. Statewide the figure was similar with an average 2.63 people per household. The 2000 median household income in Otero County was \$30,861; in Alamogordo it was slightly higher at \$30,928. These figures are somewhat lower than the statewide median of \$34,133.

Households receiving public assistance comprised 4.4 percent of all households in the County, slightly lower than the statewide rate of 4.7 percent. The rates for Alamogordo were even lower at 4.1 percent. The poverty rate for families in 1999 was 15.6 percent in Otero County and 13.2 percent in Alamogordo. The statewide poverty rate was between these two rates at 14.5 percent.

Among County residents 25 years old or older in 2000, 29.2 percent were high school graduates and 15.4 percent had a bachelors degree or higher. Statewide the high school graduate figure was slightly lower at 26.6 percent but the bachelor's degree or higher figure was significantly higher at 23.5 percent. People with some college education made up 51.8 percent of the Otero County population, slightly lower than the 52.3 percent for the State as a whole.

In summary, the population of Otero County grew at the same average annual rate as the State population over the past decade. The 2000 County population was slightly younger, with a higher percentage under age 20, but with the same proportion aged 65 and over. Significantly fewer County than State residents are of Hispanic background. While somewhat more County residents had high school diplomas, significantly fewer earned bachelor degrees or higher. Moreover, while the State and County had a comparable average household size, the median household income in the County was lower.

### 3. Future Population

The Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) at the University of New Mexico prepares population projections for counties in New Mexico. Table 2-2 shows BBER population projections for Otero County and the State of New Mexico in 10-year intervals from 2010 to 2030. The County and the State are projected to grow at very similar moderate rates over the next 30 years. According to these projections, Otero County can expect an additional 11,050 residents by the year 2030.

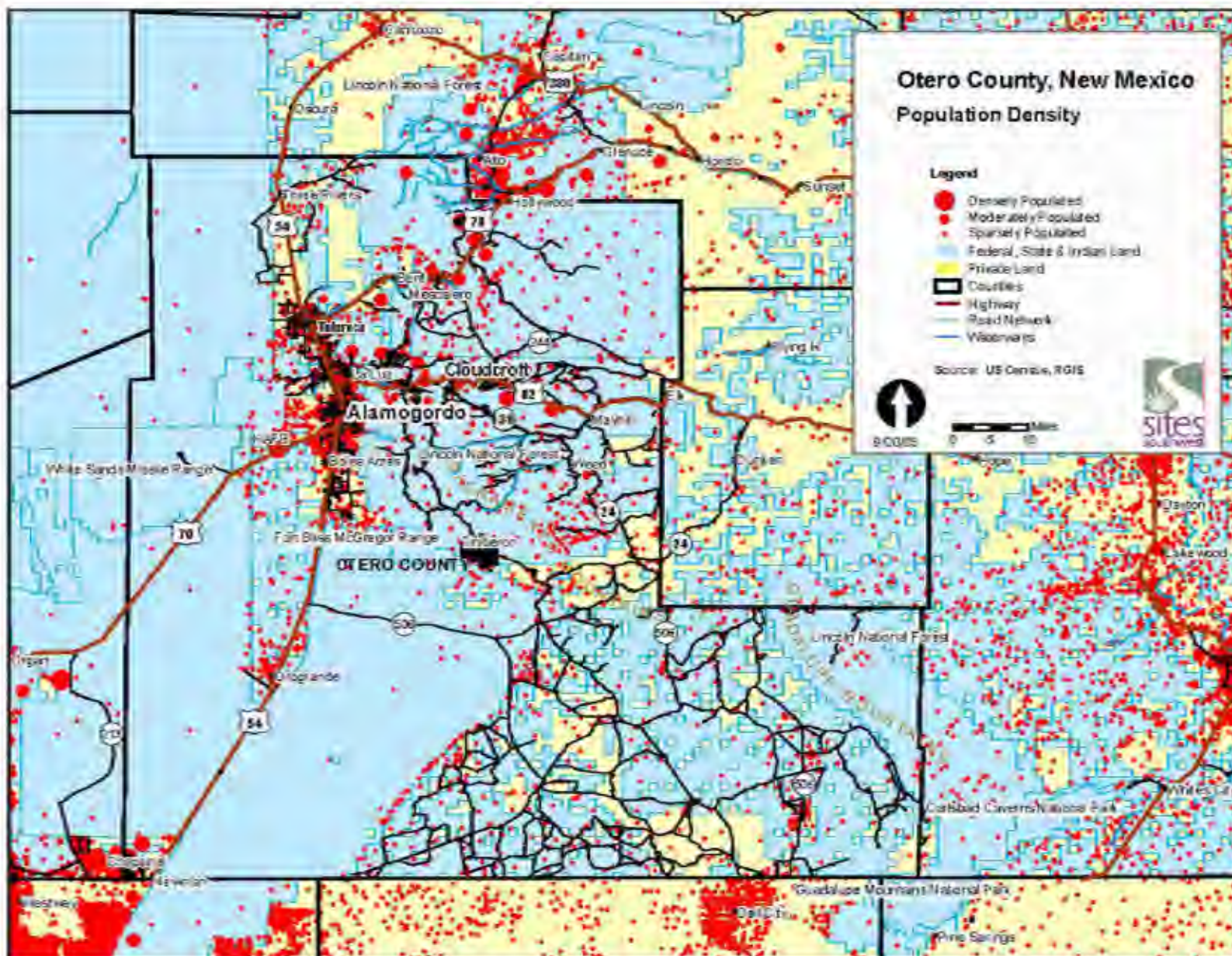
**Table 2-2. Population Projections, 2010-2030, Otero County and the State of New Mexico**

Area	2000	2010		2020		2030	
	Population	Population	Avg. Annual Growth	Population	Avg. Annual Growth	Population	Avg. Annual Growth
Otero County	62,298	67,018	0.73%	70,508	0.51%	73,348	0.40%
New Mexico	1,819,046	2,112,986	1.51%	2,383,116	1.21%	2,626,553	0.98%

Source: Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of New Mexico



Figure 2-3 Population Density



## C. Existing Governmental Structure and Capacity

Review of the County's governance structure and budget information helps determine its capacity to carry out recommendations of the plan. This section reviews the County administration, municipal revenue sources and tax structure to evaluate whether the County is able to staff and fund projects on its own.

Otero County is governed by a three-member, elected County Commission. As of March 2005, the County employed 209 persons, 150 of whom worked in the Sheriff's Department, Detention, the Road Department, or Assessor's Office. The number of employees in each of the remaining offices ranged from one to nine.

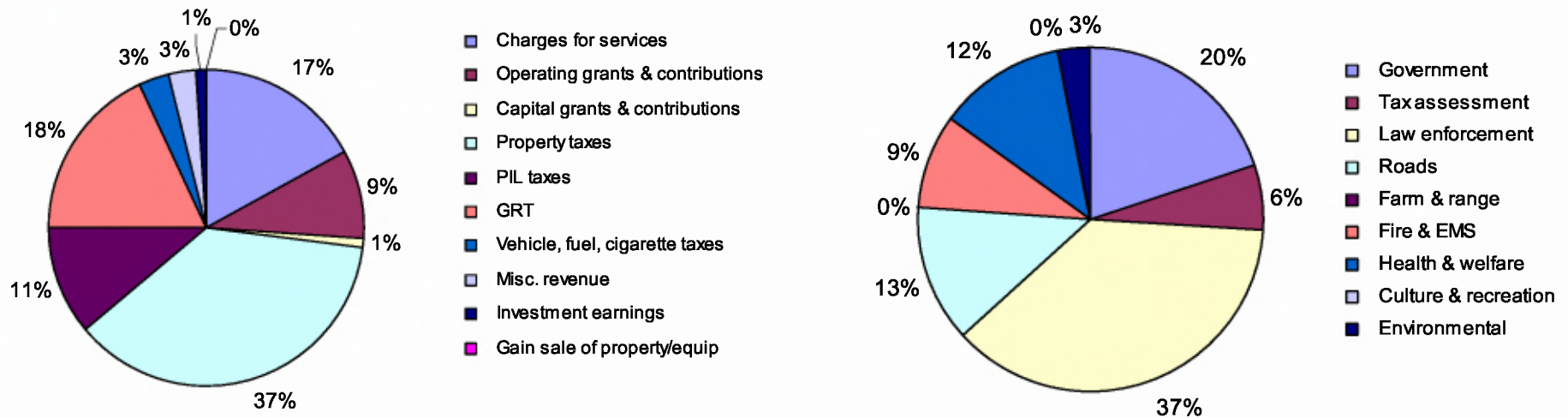
The County provides the following services as authorized by public law: public safety (police and fire), roads, health and social services, farm and range, recreation, tourist promotion, and general administrative services. Revenues and expenses for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2003, are shown in Figure 2-4.

### 1. County Budget

The County received about \$16.3 million in revenues. Nearly half its total revenues (48 percent) came from property taxes and payments-in-lieu of taxes. Property taxes on the 11 percent of land that is privately owned generated nearly \$6 million in revenues or 37 percent of total revenues. By contrast, payments-in-lieu of taxes made by owners of the 78 percent of land in the County that is owned by Federal and State governments generated only about \$1.79 million. The next highest sources were gross receipts taxes (18 percent) and charges for services (17 percent). Operating grants and contributions also brought in about nine percent of revenues (State of New Mexico, 2003).

Law enforcement accounted for the largest part of the expenditures in Fiscal 2003 (37 percent) with general government second (20 percent). The next highest expenditures were made on roads (13 percent) and health and welfare (12 percent).

Figure 2-4. Otero County Revenues and Expenditures, 2003



## 2. County Gross Receipts Tax Revenues

Otero County enacted a general gross receipts tax of 5.8125 percent in Fiscal 2005. The three incorporated cities imposed additional taxes that generated a higher tax rate -- Alamogordo at 7.25 percent, and both Cloudcroft and Tularosa at 7.0 percent. The gross receipts tax revenues fund the State debt service, the County operational costs and debt service, the school district operating costs, debt service, capital improvements, and the Alamogordo branch of NMSU. In the incorporated cities, the gross receipts taxes also fund their respective municipal operating costs and debt service.

In 2003, the last year for which data were available, the retail sector in Otero County reported \$247,017,880 in taxable gross receipts, which comprised 37.3 percent of total taxable gross receipts generated in the County. This was the largest percentage of any sector of the County economy (New Mexico Tax and Revenue Department 2004). Total taxable gross receipts from all sectors contributed \$3,008,272 in gross receipts taxes to the County's general revenues, or 18 percent of total revenues.

Table 2-3. Gross Receipts by Sector of the Economy, 2003, Otero County, NM

Sector of the Economy	County Total Reported Taxable Gross Receipts	Percent of Total
Retail Trade	\$247,017,880	37.3%
Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting, and Fishing	\$ 977,550	0.1%
Mining	\$7,186,838	1.1%
Utilities	\$40,036,667	6.0%
Construction	\$96,610,557	14.6%
Manufacturing	\$11,904,112	1.8%
Wholesale Trade	\$19,493,705	2.9%
Transportation and Warehousing	\$3,328,664	0.5%
Finance and Insurance	\$4,164,717	0.6%
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	\$7,812,933	1.2%
All Other Services and Unclassified Establishments	\$223,989,056	33.8%
<b>TOTAL ALL SECTORS</b>	<b>\$662,522,679</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: New Mexico Tax and Revenue Department 2004

## 3. Government Issues

The overriding government issue is how the County can work most effectively with the municipal governments regarding such issues as water supplies and land development and with Federal and State land managers regarding US Government-owned and controlled land in the County.



#### **4. Desired Future Government Structure**

In the future, the Otero County Commission could be expanded from three to five members. Otero County would establish strong cooperative relationships with the municipalities within its borders, other counties, and with Federal and State government agencies that manage land in the County.

##### **Govt. Goal 1. Increase intergovernmental cooperation with municipalities and State and Federal agencies.**

- Strategy a. Coordinate firefighting with the USDA Forest Service so that County volunteer fire departments are the first responders to communities located in the National Forest.
- Strategy b. Pursue multi-county and agency agreements regarding water.
- Strategy c. If appropriate, use a professional facilitator for conflict resolution.
- Strategy d. Designate staff and funding to support cooperative efforts if necessary.
- Strategy e. Develop strong relationships with other governmental bodies.
  - Hold quarterly meetings in population centers
  - Hold special meetings between the County and municipal governments and other agencies.
- Strategy f. Share funding of programs with other governments.
- Strategy g. Improve communications with other government agencies, for example, by using available technology.





### 3. History

It is important to understand the past as well as the present in developing goals for the future. The following history of Otero County was derived from information in the 1973 Otero County Comprehensive Plan supplemented by updated material in the White Sands Missile Range Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan.

#### A. Historical and Existing Conditions

The general sequence in the history of Otero County started with pre-Columbian settlement by Indians, exploration and settlement by the Spaniards and westward expansion by the pioneers. It was followed by the development of the railroad and railroad-oriented industries, including tourism. Next came the US Military establishment during and following World War II, and finally the modern development of the County as a good place to live and work.

##### 1. Early Records

The earliest record of man in Otero County dates from about 1000 B.C. These earliest formative populations lived in pithouse villages and exploited a wide range of natural resources in addition to pursuing agriculture. By the end of the first millennium, stone and adobe pueblos replaced the pithouse, and agriculture had made widespread gathering of wild plants less critical to survival. During the late 1300s, and other foodstuffs were grown, made possible by improved seed and an unprecedented period of rainfall. The pueblo communities were held together by widespread trade and, more than likely, a common religion. Sites related to these settlements are on the State Register of Cultural Properties and contain the best examples of perishable material found within the state including rugs, mats, baskets and food items.

The Jornada Branch of the Mogollon Culture lived in northern Otero County at the Three Rivers Petroglyph and Pueblo Site from A.D. 1050 to 1200. This site, also on the State Register, consists of prehistoric dwelling ruins, a pit house and petroglyphs. The site has been improved with pathways and picnic shelters and is administered by the Bureau of Land Management. Mogollons also lived at the Escondido Ruin where architectural remains include three parallel discontinuous alignments of pueblo rooms constructed of coursed adobe. This latter site also is on the State Register of Cultural Properties.

Around 1400 A.D., for reasons not completely understood, the large agricultural settlements in the southern and eastern areas on what is now the White Sands Missile Range were abandoned. Archaeologists speculate that the Jornada Mogollon in the south and east may have remained in the area but altered their economy to that of former times—hunting and gathering wild native animals and plants. By 1450 A.D., the Apache from the north moved into the region. By the time of the Spanish Entrada in 1540 A.D., the ancestors of the Mescalero Apache occupied areas of the Pecos River drainage and the Sacramento Mountains while using the Tularosa Basin and the San Andres, Organ and Oscura Mountains.

## 2. The Arrival of the Spanish

The first Europeans to see south-central New Mexico were the Spanish explorers Francisco Sanchez Chamuscado (1581-82), Antonia de Espejo (1582-83), and Francisco Leyva de Bonilla (1593), who all helped to explore the route from Chihuahua to the Santa Fe area. In 1598, Juan de Onate led a group of colonists through the region to establish a permanent colony and territorial capital in the northern part of the State. With the arrival of Onate and his soldier-colonists at San Juan Pueblo in 1598, the period of Spanish conquest and settlement in New Mexico took place until 1822 when the Treaty of Cordova, Mexico gained independence from Spain, was signed.

New Mexico was under Mexican national sovereignty until August 18, 1846. On that date, Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearney led the Army of the West into Santa Fe and took over this land from Mexican Governor Manuel Armijo as part of the US quest to acquire Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California from Mexico. Thereafter, the military commander of New Mexico exercised executive control until 1851 when the Territory of New Mexico was established by congressional action. Governors were appointed by the President of the United States until New Mexico achieved statehood in 1912.

The US Army established a number of forts along the Rio Grande from Fort Bliss to Santa Fe. The army provided protection from the Apaches, surveyed lands, and performed other tasks as needed. With the outbreak of the Civil War, the Confederate Army of Texas began a campaign to capture the mineral-rich lands of New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado. Fort Bliss, Fort Fillmore, Fort Stanton, Fort Craig and the communities of Albuquerque and Santa Fe were over taken. Union forces eventually defeated the Confederate Army at the Battle of Glorieta Pass.

Settlement in the more remote regions was very dangerous as the region was the homeland for the Mescalero and Chiricahua Apache. The Indians were made residents of New Mexico territory under the signing of the Treaty of Cordova in 1821. But peace was not to be had because the Indians, feeling increasing pressures of continued intrusion into their lands, stepped up their raids on livestock herds, settlers and prospectors. Colonel Kit Carson was placed in charge of the military forces of New Mexico and concentrated his action against the Mescalero Apaches, who were largely subdued by the summer of 1863 and placed on the Bosque Redondo Reservation near Fort Summer. In November 1865, the Mescalero Apaches deserted the reservation en masse and scattered in small bands, gradually returning to the Fort Stanton area in Lincoln County. The Mescalero Apache Reservation was established by executive order on May 29, 1873, opening the surrounding region to increased EuroAmerican/Hispanic settlement, especially with the Desert Land Act of 1877. By the mid-1880s, after the battle at Hembrillo Basin in 1880, it became safer to settle in the more remote areas of south-central New Mexico.

In the early 1880s ranchers began establishing ranches in the San Andres, Organ, and Oscura mountains and on the floor of the Tularosa Basin. Herds of cattle, goats, sheep, and horses grazed on unfenced land. Ranchers applied for homestead patents around springs and grazing patents for prime pasturelands, but often they were not successfully completed. Cattle were grazed on open land. By the turn of the century, and into the early 1900s, ranches were scattered throughout the area. Water was usually the determining factor for the success or failure of a ranch. Early ranches had hand dug wells where the water table was shallow while the later ranches relied on drilling for deep wells. Windmills brought the water to the surface. Dirt tanks were also developed by constructing an earthen dam across intermittent drainages to capture and hold runoff water from winter and summer storms.

Otero County was created by the Territorial Legislature in 1899 and in its present form contains portions of former counties including Dona Ana, Socorro and Lincoln. The County was named for Miguel A. Otero, a territorial governor who served from 1897 until 1906. During the westward expansion, the Butterfield Overland Mail Route (1855-1861) was one of the few major stage lines operating through the territory. The route started in St. Louis and Memphis, entered New Mexico from the south at the Ojos de Los Alamos Station, then swung southwest back into Texas to the Hueco Station. The Route and the Alamo Springs Stage Station are on the State Register and its approximate route passed through Otero County.

### **3. Settlements**

Among the earliest settlements in the New Mexico Territory were those at Tularosa and La Luz. In 1858 Mexicans came from the Rio Grande to the district, but were driven back by the Native Americans. The former returned in 1860 and settled on the site of Tularosa. The town was platted by US government surveyors in 1862. Colonists then began to appropriate waters of the Tularosa River, building canals and ditches from the foothills, erecting dams at proper places and distributing the water. In 1905 the people of Tularosa instituted legal proceedings against the federal government to restrain the use of water by the Native Americans. This established the use of water on the Tularosa Basin for irrigated agriculture.

The railroad played an important part in the early development of Otero County when Charles B. Eddy, owner of the El Paso and Northern Railway, purchased the Oliver Lee Ranch and subdivided a portion of it. Lots were first sold in June 1898 at the same time the first train arrived from El Paso. Alamogordo was the headquarters of the railroad company, which at that time was known as the El Paso Northeastern Railway. Then in 1898 the railroad was extended from Alamogordo into the Sacramento Mountains and finally reached as far as a point known as Russia in 1903. Much rich timber land then had access to rail facilities, and the Alamogordo Lumber Company went into operation at that time. Initial cutting made railroad ties and bridge timbers for the growing railroad system.

### **4. Tourism**

Visitors also began to come from El Paso to see the mountain scenery and stay at the lodge at Cloudcroft. The railroad between Alamogordo and Capitan, passing through Tularosa and Carrizozo, was opened in 1899 to serve the shippers of coal and gold ore from the mines in Lincoln County to the north. This railroad later became part of the Southern Pacific System. It still operates for freight purposes except for the line from Alamogordo to Russia through Cloudcroft which was abandoned in 1947. A scenic trestle on this abandoned line lies just west of Cloudcroft and is now on the State Register of Cultural Properties.

### **5. Education**

Illiteracy was extremely high in New Mexico in spite of the educational efforts by religious groups until 1891 when free public education became law. Schools were built in Alamogordo shortly after its founding in 1898. Alamogordo was selected as the County seat in 1899 when the County was created. Alamogordo was well known as a health resort at one time due to the presence of the Fraternal City Sanitarium located at the base of the Sacramento Mountains southeast of Alamogordo. Following the establishment of national monuments under the Act of Preservation of American Antiquities on June 8, 1906, White Sands National Monument was created in 1933 under the National Parks Program of Stabilization and Preservation.

## 6. Military Origins

This remote region was one of the last frontiers in the United States even in the early 1900s. Ranch families had close bonds, often tied together by the marriage of children. They helped each other out with ranch work and educated their children at home schools and one-room schoolhouses. The remoteness of the region, however, and demands of World War II and the subsequent Cold War, inspired the US Government to select the region for two wartime projects: White Sands Proving Ground (1945) and the Trinity Site (1946) where the first atomic bomb was exploded in a test in Lincoln County.

Alamogordo reached a population of 3,900 persons by 1940, which expanded after the establishment of the Alamogordo Army Airfield in January 1942, and the subsequent increase in personnel when heavy bombardment troops were trained there in 1944. After the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Alamogordo Army Air Force Base all but closed, and there were few military or civilian personnel stationed or working at the base until September of 1946.

In March 1947, the US Army traded Wendover Field, Utah, for the Alamogordo base in order to begin research programs in what become known as the Air Force Missile Development Center. The field was named Holloman Air Force Base when the US Air Force gained its autonomy from the Department of the Army in 1947. It became the center of activity for the White Sands Missile Range and the Sacramento Peak solar observatory at Sunspot, which started in 1949, grew substantially until 1953 and has remained to the present day. The military population has fluctuated in Otero County. In the early 1970s, approximately 11,000 people lived at Holloman. The number of residents on base declined to about 3,500 in Fiscal 2004, but more than 6,000 employees continue to work on the base.

The growth of the base spurred the development of a large local service industry in the form of motels, retail and service establishments, wholesale distributors and several small industrial firms, most of which are located in or around the County seat. Alamogordo remains the major population center of the County, followed by Tularosa and Cloudcroft, the other two incorporated municipalities. The Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation is specially reserved government land for the Native Americans, and the local governments do not have any jurisdiction or control over these lands held in trust by the US Government.

## **4. Cultural Resources**

### **A. Existing Cultural Resources Conditions**

Historical background is important to determining land use policy because some of these sites and site improvements or landmarks have been recognized and placed on the State Register of Cultural Properties. None has been placed on the National Register of Historical Places and many other historical, cultural or scenic landmarks have yet to be officially recognized. Since tourism, as will be noted later, plays a very important part in the economy of the County, recognition of historical sites is important to the documentation and preservation of sites and facilities in which tourists are usually very interested.

Since 1969 archeologists have been working on a limited archeological survey of the Tularosa Basin. This research was under the auspices of the Human Systems Research, Inc., a private non-profit corporation. Efforts have been mainly directed towards chronology and ecology of human occupation in the Tularosa Basin during the past 10,000 years. The fruits of this research will probably reveal many new sites which should be recommended for addition to the State Register of Cultural Properties by the Tularosa Basin Historical Society.

### **B. Cultural Resources Issues**

Many historical societies around the State have assessed the historical sites in their respective areas. As a part of good land use policy, it is recommended that the Tularosa Basin Historical Society follow this procedure and make recommendations regarding various sites to the State Historical Preservation Officer for consideration by the Cultural Review Committee.

Buildings, ruins, artifacts and other features recommended for preservation should still have enough original quality to be of interest. Mere sites where buildings once existed but where nothing stands at present deserve a marker-type classification as there is nothing for anyone to see on the ground. Such sites include Blazer's Mill, the Ostic Grist Mill at Fresno Canyon and some old mining towns near Orogrande.

### **C. Desired Future Cultural Resources Conditions**

To encourage restoration and preservation of cultural properties that are under private ownership, all cultural properties listed on the official State Register with the written consent of the owner and which are available for educational purposes under conditions approved by the Committee should be exempt from that portion of local, city, county and school property taxes that is offset by a properly documented showing of Committee-approved restoration, preservation, and maintenance expenses. Those declared historic sites in Otero County should already be receiving these tax benefits, while those that are yet to be nominated will be entitled to some once approved.

Over a long period of time, nonprofessional excavation of historic sites has resulted in much valuable historic material falling into private hands or in museums of the excavating schools. As much as possible of this material should be returned to Otero County and placed in the Tularosa Basin Historical Museum. In the future no natural artifacts should be permitted to leave the County without the consent of the local governing bodies, the Board of County Commissioners, and the Tularosa Basin Historical Society.

## D. Cultural Resources Goals

- CR1. Continue to offer tax benefits to privately-owned cultural properties that are listed on the State Register and area available for educational purposes.**
- CR2. Establish a policy that no natural artifacts from Otero County may leave the County without the consent of the Otero Board of County Commissioners.**
- CR3. Encourage valuable historic material from Otero County to be returned and placed in the Tularosa Basin Historical Museum.**

## E. Implementation of Cultural Resources Goals

**Table 4-1. Implementation of Cultural Resources Goals**

<b>Implementation Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
Tax benefits	County Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to offer tax benefits to privately-owned cultural properties that are listed on the State Register and are available for educational purposes.</li> </ul>	Property tax schedule
Natural artifacts policy	County Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a policy that no natural artifacts from Otero County may leave the County without the consent of the County Commissioners.</li> </ul>	N/A
Return of artifacts	County Commission, Tularosa Basin Historical Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage valuable historic material from Otero County to be returned and placed in the Tularosa Basin Historical Society Museum.</li> </ul>	NA

## 5. Natural Resources

### A. Existing Natural Resources Conditions

#### 1. Geography

Otero County encompasses 4,248,320 acres located in the Sacramento section of the Basin and Range physiographic region overlaying the Permian Basin. This area of southeastern New Mexico has hot arid plains with sweeping vistas and cooler mountainous areas with regular annual snowfall. The Sacramento Mountains and Guadalupe Mountains cut through the County and form the eastern boundary of the largest city in Otero County, Alamogordo. These mountains are home to the Lincoln National Forest, a popular recreation destination in southeastern New Mexico. Otero County elevation ranges from 3,700 feet in the southeast part of the County to 12,003 feet in the north.

Another principal feature is the Tularosa Basin, a north-south sloping graben partially filled with bolson deposits and gypsum sand dunes, which comprises most of western Otero County. The White Sands National Monument is a famous landmark in this region and known for its unusually bright white gypsum sands. The basin extends west from the Sacramento Mountains to the San Andres Mountains of Sierra County and the Organ Mountains of Dona Ana County. Additional but lesser known landmarks in the area are the Cornudas Mountains and the Jarilla Mountains located in the southern part of the County.

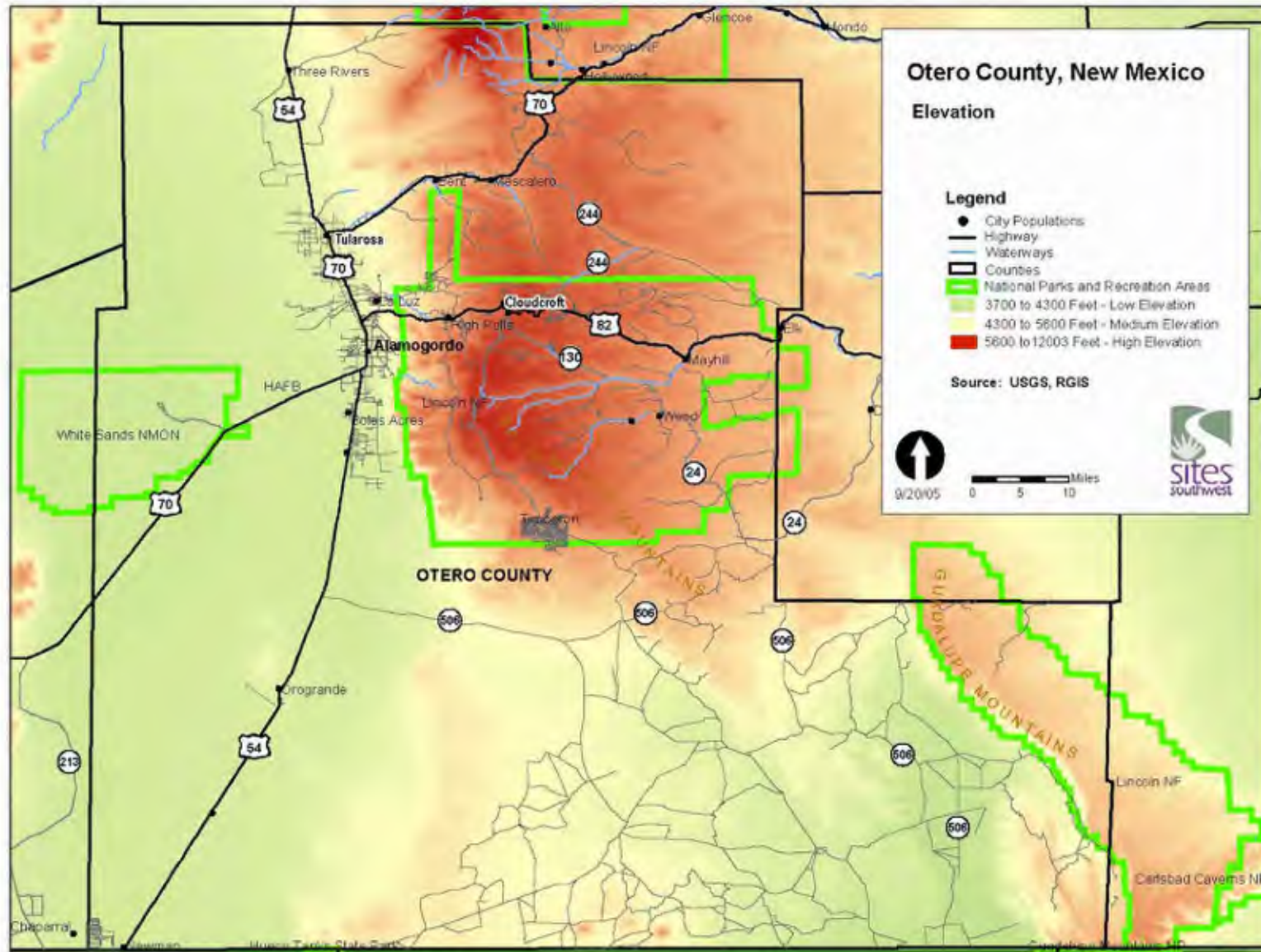
#### 2. Climate

Average annual precipitation ranges from 6 inches in the low-lying western edge of the County in the White Sands area to 25 inches in the mountainous area from Mescalero northward in Lincoln County. The greatest annual rainfall on record for the County (and the State) was 62 inches at White Tail in 1941, and the least annual rainfall was 3 inches at White Sands National Monument in 1956. Precipitation consists of both rain and snow. The greatest amount of precipitation occurs during the warm months from May through September. Most of this precipitation occurs in the form of short, local, high-intensity summer thunderstorms frequently originating from the Gulf of Mexico. Mid-winter snows and rain form an additional high precipitation period. Late winter through early spring is typically the driest period of the year in Otero County.

The prevailing winds are westerly most of the year but are interrupted during the rainy season. During this time the winds are primarily from the south and east. However, the wind direction varies widely due to the great temperature fluctuations between the valley heat and the cooler mountains. The average wind speed is nine miles per hour during the windiest months of March, April and May. During the windy season there are frequent dust storms occurring over the Tularosa Basin and White Sands National Monument with winds averaging 25 to 45 miles per hour and occasionally gusting to 60 and 70 miles per hour. Sometimes brief dust storms accompany thundershowers. Approximately three weeks a year the visibility is greatly reduced, often to six miles or less, due to blowing dust.



Figure 5-1. Elevation





The Basin is cooled each evening as a 5-mile-per-hour downdraft carries the cooler mountain air to the desert below. During the windy season there are dust storms near the population centers and the White Sands National Monument. The Tularosa Basin is much less windy than most other areas of the State, but has very fine, silty soils. When disturbed or bare these soils are easily carried away by almost any wind. Severe dust storms occur near populated areas and construction sites when wind speeds of 25 to 45 miles per hour occur, typically in the spring.

### **3. Vegetation**

Otero County has the most vegetation diversity of any county in New Mexico. Several Inter-Mountain valleys are farmed using surface water from area streams. Sacramento Mountain forests provide timber for area sawmills as well as grazing for livestock. Thriving populations of wildlife make their home in the mountains.

Most agricultural activity in the County is ranching and timber products. Although there is irrigated agriculture near Tularosa and in the southeast near the Texas border, farming is hampered by the salinity of both the water and soils. Six of the seven life zones are found in Otero County, ranging from the Chihuahuan desert to the edge of the alpine tundra zone which supports only low-growing grasses, lichens and mosses above the timberline. The basin areas feature sparse grasses, shrubs and low trees. The two million-acre Otero Mesa is the largest Chihuahuan Desert grassland in North America and the largest habitat in the hemisphere for pronghorn antelope. The shallow bedrock on the Mesa prevents mesquite from gaining a toehold and allows black gramma and other native grasses to dominate the landscape punctuated with clumps of althorn, tobosa grass, and yucca. The Lincoln National Forest contains Intermediate and Woodland forestry zones in two management units: the Sacramento Mountains and the Guadalupe Mountains. Trees located in the Sacramento unit are Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, white fir, spruce and aspen. The Guadalupe unit contains uncommon species such as mescal bean, Texas madrone, chinquapin oak, Knolton hophornbean, Texas mulberry and Mexican buckeye.

The Chihuahuan Desert provides grazing to many desert ranches in the Otero Mesa area and the Tularosa Basin. The largest acequia in the County, Tularosa Community Ditch, is located in the desert at the mouth of the Tularosa Creek. There currently is also irrigated agriculture in southeastern Otero County, mostly situated along the Texas/New Mexico state line.

### **4. Water**

Otero County has very little potable surface water. The Tularosa Basin contains one of the largest areas of saline water in the United States. This saline water could be converted to potable water, but that is not being done at this time. Generally speaking, potable water in Otero County is available in limited quantities in the areas where demand is greatest.

Perennial streams include Three Rivers, La Luz Creek, Tularosa Creek, and the Penasco River. The Sacramento River and the Agua Chiquita Creek were flowing semi-perennial streams in the 1970s and 1980s but are now dry nearly all year.

A regional water plan for the Tularosa Basin contains detailed information about water sources.

## **5. Resource Products and Activities**

There has been a long tradition of people making their livelihood through productive use of the County's natural resources. This continued even as the Federal government established its authority over much of the land in the County.

The County has an abundance of timber products from the forested areas. The mountain regions are primarily forested areas under the jurisdiction of the Lincoln National Forest cooperating with the US Forest Service and the Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation. The Lincoln National Forest contains Intermediate and Woodland forestry zones in the Sacramento Mountains and the Guadalupe Mountains. Commonly harvested trees in the Sacramento unit are Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, white fir, spruce and aspen. The Guadalupe unit contains uncommon species such as mescal bean, Texas madrone, chinquapin oak, Knolton hophornbean, Texas mulberry and Mexican buckeye.

The Mesa also offers a wealth of opportunities for recreationists who enjoy hiking, camping, birding, hunting, rock climbing, photography, and horseback riding activities.

There are 23 acequias or community ditches in Otero County. Tularosa Community Ditch is the largest with approximately 1,200 acres irrigated from the Tularosa Creek. Crops grown include hay, chile, irrigated pasture, and several orchards including pecans and pistachios. The dry desert climate makes this a highly preferred source of horse hay, grapes and pistachios. Several horse trainers have recently relocated to the Tularosa area. Farmers in southeast Otero County grow mostly alfalfa hay and chile using center pivot sprinklers. Grazing is an historical use throughout the County.

## **B. Natural Resources Issues**

The availability and type of water supplies are commonly accepted as the limiting factor for many activities and is a concern in this frequently arid region. The County has supported desalination pilot projects. There are also numerous community water systems serving local areas within the County. The State has embarked on carrying out a policy to consolidate these smaller systems into regional systems. Water supplies are further addressed in Chapter 10.

Otero Mesa, under BLM jurisdiction, has been the focus of controversy for oil and gas drilling. Environmentalists and some County ranchers have opposed the latest drilling proposal, which would open most of the BLM land to drilling but would restrict the total number of wells, for the time being. This could change, however, if levels greater than the expected low-to-moderate levels of these resources are found.

Similarly, some residents would like to ease restrictions on using other resources on Federal lands, such as timber that is dead, diseased or otherwise scarified. This is addressed further under Chapter 6.

## C. Desired Natural Resources Future Conditions

Otero County seeks to balance the sustainable use of its natural resources, both for products and recreation, while also conserving them for future generations. To that end, the County establishes the following goals:

## D. Natural Resources Goals

### **NR Goal 1. Conserve and utilize our natural resources in a manner that will sustain them for use by future generations.**

Strategy a. Review current practices and performance of managing agencies for sustainability, moving towards ecosystem health and community safety.

### **NR Goal 2. Protect the quality of the environment through good stewardship practices and through a balanced management approach to using natural resources.**

Strategy a. Coordinate Federal/State agency management to consider entire watershed/ecosystems in relation to landscapes (grazing, soil conservation, preservation of agricultural land etc.).

Strategy b. Ensure County involvement in Federal/State agency decisions about the use of public land.

- Make use of Public Land Use Advisory Committee.
- Advocate managing the forest for multiple use.
- Advocate managing grazing resources to include elk and other wild game animals as well as domestic livestock according to available resources so the environment is not degraded.

Strategy c. Compile environmental documents in a locally accessible archive.

Strategy d. Develop a list of sources such as experts qualified in subject matter to assist in decision-making/review of resource proposals

Strategy e. Use internal budget and regular programs.

**NR Goal 3. Pursue policies to protect Otero County's natural resources (water, watersheds, forests, timber, wildlife, soils, minerals, lakes, open spaces, rangeland, air quality).**

Strategy a. Adopt grading requirements that protect air quality.

Strategy b. Monitor and protect wellheads.

## E. Implementation of Natural Resources Goals

**Table 5-1. Implementation of Natural Resources Goals**

<b>Implementation Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
Protect environmental quality	County Commission, PLUAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Coordinate Federal/State agency management to consider entire watershed/ecosystems in relation to landscapes.</li><li>▪ Ensure County involvement in Federal/State agency decisions about the use of public land.</li><li>▪ Compile environmental documents in a locally accessible archive.</li><li>▪ Develop a list of experts on various subjects.</li></ul>	General Fund, Federal agencies
Conserve and use natural resources	County Commission, PLUAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Review current practices and performance of managing agencies for sustainability.</li></ul>	General Fund, Federal agencies
Pursue policies	County Commission, PLUAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Adopt grading requirements</li><li>▪ Monitor and protect wellheads</li></ul>	General Fund, Federal agencies

## 6. Public Lands

This chapter addresses issues that stem from the fact that the majority of land in Otero County is owned or managed by the US and New Mexico Governments. The term public land refers to all the lands owned or managed by the Federal Government or the State of New Mexico or their agencies. The interface between the County and Federal and State land managers is considered so important that the County has appointed a special committee to deal with these issues, called the Public Land Use Advisory Committee (PLUAC).

### A. Existing Public Land Conditions

#### 1. Total land area and ownership

Otero County has a total land area of 4,248,320 gross acres.

The most striking land ownership characteristic in Otero County is the extremely high percentage of land that is in public ownership. Only 11 percent of the land area in the County is privately owned. The remaining 89 percent is in Federal, State and Tribal ownership, as shown in Figure 6-1.

The Federal government is a major presence, with 67 percent of land managed by Federal agencies. The Federal land management agencies responsible for the largest land areas are the US Department of Defense (Holloman AFB, Fort Bliss and White Sands Missile Range), the USDA Forest Service (Lincoln National Forest), and the US Bureau of Land Management.

The County desires to guide decisions regarding the use of public lands and public resources in Otero County and to protect the rights of private landowners and the rights of all citizens with respect to the multiple use of public lands.

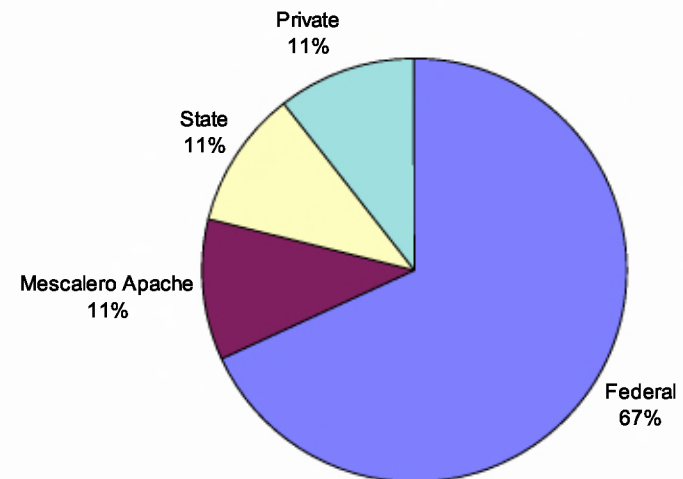


Figure 6-1. Land Management

## 2. Historical and Current Land Use

Historically, Otero County residents used the land for agriculture, ranching, forestry, recreation, hunting and mining of gold and coal. These traditional uses have diminished somewhat over the years and been partially supplanted by the military missions at Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range, tourism of the County's scenic and scientific attractions, and retirement pursuits. Despite this, agriculture and ranching remain an important way of life important to the customs and culture of the County.

In 2002, for example, there were 1,207,598 acres of farmland spread among 622 farms in the County according to the US Census of Agriculture (USDA 2002). The majority of farms, 376, were between 1 and 49 acres, with the median size being 45 acres. Some 64 farms, however, were at least 1,000 acres or more and another 32 ranged from 500 to 999 acres. While cattle ranching dropped to about half what it was in 1973, it has been supplanted by sheep and lamb ranching, egg production, and orchards, which grow pistachios, pecans, and grapes. In fact, the oldest evidence of agriculture in the United States is in Otero County.

The County might consider designating or mapping prime agricultural or grazing lands, based on soil type and water availability, to aid in their preservation for future generations.

Table 6-1. Otero County Agricultural Products

<b>Livestock</b>	<b>1973</b>	<b>2002</b>
Cattle and Cows Inventory	No.	No.
All Cattle	35,000	16,833
Milk Cows	100	15
Beef Cows	19,900	11,198
All Cows	20,000	11,213
Hogs and Pigs Inventory		142
Sheep and Lambs Inventory		9,168
Layers 20 weeks old +		2,698
<b>Major Crop Acreage</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Forage (hay, haylage, silage, greenchop)	3,400	2,000
Wheat	180	N/A
All Sorghum	810	N/A
Sunflower seeds		(1 farm)
Vegetables harvested for sale		21
Land in Orchards		3,850

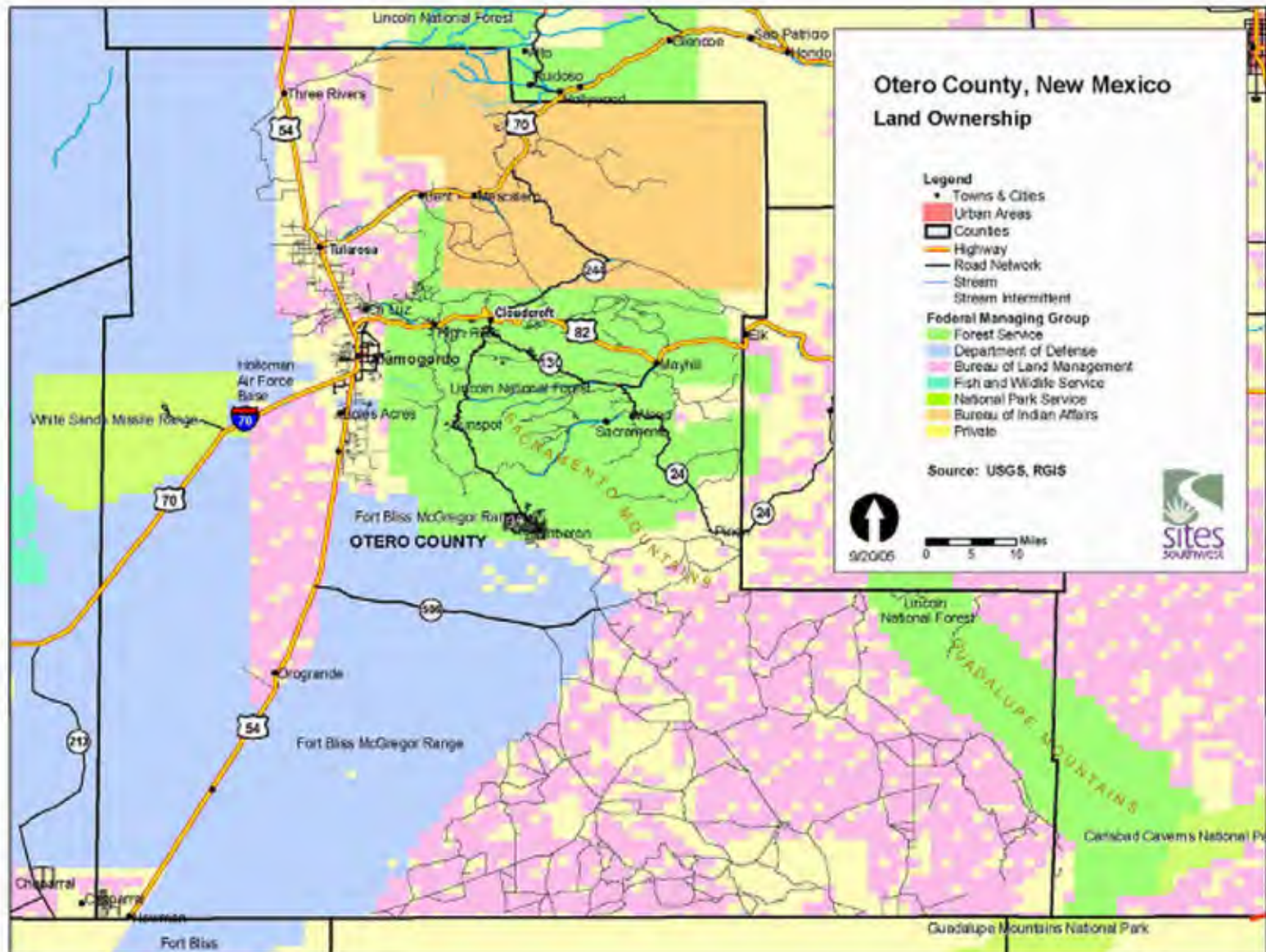
Source: 2002 Census of Agriculture and 1973 Otero County Comprehensive Plan

## B. Public Land Use Issues and Planning

Otero County citizens have direct control over only the small portion of private land within its borders, yet the County's economy is dependent on business activities on Federal and State lands. These activities are inseparably tied to the private, patented lands in the County. This situation creates conflict when residents perceive that Federal and State land managers are making land use decisions within the County without sufficient County notice, guidance and consultation.



Figure 6-2. Land Ownership



The nature and intent of Otero County government land use planning is to protect the custom and culture of County citizens through protection of private property rights, facilitation of a free market economy, and the establishment of a process to ensure self-determination at the County level by local communities and individuals. Therefore, the County has and will continue to develop and implement land use mechanisms that focus on Federal and State land uses and activities.

The County and its citizens expect the multiple use of Federal and State public lands and resources in the County as required by management plans. They consider it imperative that Federal and State agencies give them timely notice of pending actions affecting local communities and citizens and coordinate with them in the planning and implementation of those actions. These expectations are founded in requirements of several pieces of Federal legislation.

## **1. Federal/County Jurisdiction in Land Use Issues**

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 USDA Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, for example, are required to consider the effect of their actions on communities adjacent to or near Federal lands and on employment in the affected areas. Four major Federal statutes dictate the Federal Government's policy when dealing with land use issues in counties. These are the National Environmental Policy Act, the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, the National Forest Management Act, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act. These mandate that decisions regarding allocation of natural resources and land uses on public lands be made through a comprehensive public planning process. They also mandate that the Federal Government and appropriate agencies coordinate closely with state and local government on land use issues. These statutes are summarized below:

### ***National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)***

This Act requires Federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives to those actions. To meet this requirement, Federal agencies have to conduct an environmental analysis that is documented in an Environmental Assessment (EA). If the EA shows that the project may have a significant effect on the human environment a more detailed analysis – an Environmental Impact Statement or EIS – is required. This examines the environmental impact of the proposed action, adverse environmental effects that can't be avoided should the proposal be implemented, alternatives to the proposed action, the relationship between the local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources that would be involved in the proposed action's implementation. NEPA allows State and local governments to develop their own environmental plans. It also requires that Federal agencies consult, coordinate and jointly conduct environmental studies, plans, review, and hearings with local county government.

NEPA states that it is the policy of the Federal Government to “use all practicable means, consistent with other essential considerations of national policy, to improve and coordinate Federal plans, functions, programs, and resources” so that the Federal Government may:

- 1) Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations,
- 2) Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings,
- 3) Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences,



- 4) Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity, and variety of individual choice,
- 5) Achieve a balance between population and resource use which will permit high standards of living and wide sharing of life's amenities, and
- 6) Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

### ***Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (ICA)***

This Act requires Federal agencies to coordinate with local governments to review Federal programs and project plans. Specifically, ICA “provides opportunities for strengthening the consultation and coordination between Federal, Local and State governments through coordination and review of proposed Federal assistance and direct development programs.”

The ICA contains Executive Order 12732, which further requires Federal agencies to coordinate with State and local governments, stating that “Federal agencies shall provide opportunities for consultation by elected officials of those State and local governments that would provide the non-Federal funds for or what would be directly affected by proposed Federal financial assistance or direct development.”

### ***US Forest Management Act of 1976***

This Act put in place a system for forest management based on the principles of multiple use and sustained yield. It requires the USDA Forest Service to coordinate land use planning efforts with those of county governments by using the NEPA process. Resource management plans are to consider both economic and environmental factors. In addition, the Act mandates that regional and forest planning be based on the following principles:

- Preservation of important historic, cultural, and natural aspects to the national heritage;
- Coordination with the land and resource planning efforts of other Federal agencies, State and local governments and Indian tribes;
- Management of National Forest System lands in a manner that is sensitive to economic efficiency; and
- Responsiveness to changing conditions of land and other resources and to changing social and economic demands of the American people.

In May 2005, the USFS published a new rule to allow road-building in the last 58.5 million acres of untouched national forests, opening them to possible logging, mining and other commercial uses. Governors can submit petitions within 18 months to stop road-building on some of the 34.3 million acres where it would now be permitted or request that new forest management plans be written to allow the construction of some of the other 24.2 million acres. Moreover, it proposed a new rule for Off Highway Vehicles in the national forest that would require each forest and grassland to designate a system of roads, trails and areas slated for motor vehicle use. It would allow national forests to denote use of routes and areas by vehicle type and, if appropriate, by time of year.

### ***Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA)***

Known as FLPMA, this Act created a single, unified statutory scheme to guide operations of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). It established a policy that most remaining public lands would be retained in Federal ownership, while allowing for some land exchanges and sale of discrete tracts. FLPMA directed the BLM to establish a planning process that resembles that used by other Federal agencies, inventorying public lands and their resources and developing

management plans. Management principles are to follow multiple use (typically grazing, energy and mineral extraction, recreation and conservation) and sustained yield. The BLM is empowered to take actions necessary to prevent “unnecessary or undue degradation” of public lands.

FLPMA requires the Department of the Interior to coordinate its land use planning and management activities with the land use planning and management programs of State and local governments within which the lands are located. Federal land managers must give consideration to local plans in the development of land use plans for public lands and provide for meaningful public involvement of State and local government officials, both elected and appointed, in the development of land use programs, land use regulations, and land use decisions for public lands. Land use plans of the Secretary of the Interior must be consistent with State and local plans to the maximum extent consistent with Federal law and the purposes of FLPMA.

## **2. Other Important Legislation Impacting Land Use**

### ***Endangered Species Act of 1973***

This authorized the determination and listing of species as endangered and threatened, prohibited their unauthorized taking, and allowed land acquisition for conservation of listed species by specific Federal funds. Amendments to the law in 1988 required the US Fish and Wildlife Service to notify State and county governments regarding all proposed listings, all proposed additions or changes in critical habitat designations, and all property protective regulations. The amendments also allow State and county governments the opportunity to participate in and influence all proposed species listing, proposed designation of critical habitat, and any other proposed regulation.

### ***Public Range Improvement Act of 1978 (PRIA)***

The PRIA was designed to improve the conditions of public rangelands so they become as productive as feasible in accordance with the FLPMA, which was also amended under the Act. To that end, it requires the US Secretaries of both the Interior and Agriculture to develop, update and maintain an inventory of range conditions and to track trends in the condition of public rangelands. It requires the Secretary to manage the public rangelands in accordance with the Taylor Grazing Act, the FLPMA, and other laws consistent with the Act's improvement program. No less than 80 percent of appropriated funds must be used for on-ground range rehabilitation, construction, maintenance and training of personnel. It also established a formula for setting fees for domestic livestock grazing on public rangelands.

Pursuant to this Act, the State of New Mexico entered into a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** with the Bureau of Land Management and the US Department of the Interior in 1980. The intent is to provide for consultation, cooperation and coordination between parties in matters relating to rangeland management on US public lands located in the State. The MOU states, “It is the policy of the State Director, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico and the Governor or New Mexico to further expand the concept of consultation, cooperation, and coordination expressed in Section 8 of the Public Rangelands Improvement Act into additional phases of the Rangeland Management Program and thus complement the Congressional intent of the Act.”

Section 8 of the PRIA requires the BLM and the USFS to engage in careful and considered consultation, cooperation and coordination with grazing permittees, lessees, and landowners involved and any State or States having lands within the area to be covered by such Allotment Management Plans (AMPs) or in revision of AMPs.

Also pursuant to PRIA, the Director of the NM Department of Agriculture entered into an **MOU with the Regional Forester (USDA)**, Forest Service/Southwestern Region, to promote the multiple-use of management of range resources in the Southwestern Region of the US Forest Service. The MOU promotes management that is responsive to the overall public interest; that promotes healthy, useful forests and grasslands; reflects a strong land ethic; and applies current scientific forest and rangeland principles. It states, "When a single allotment is involved, such cooperation (as authorized by the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of October 25, 1978) ensures full participation of the permittees and NMDA in the planning process if requested and agreed to by the permittees."

Neither the Act nor the MOUs noted above had been repealed, replaced or rescinded by July 2005.

**Presidential Executive Order 12630, Government Actions and Interference with Civil Constitutionally Protected Property Rights** was issued by President Reagan on March 15, 1988. It requires Federal government decision-makers to carefully evaluate the effects of their administrative, regulatory and legislative actions on property rights and avoid those that could result in a taking for which just compensation is required by the US Constitution. It notes that "undue delays" in the decision-making process that interfere with private property carry a risk of takings. Following the directives in this order, the US Attorney General established guidelines for Federal departments and agencies to use in evaluating the risk and avoidance of unanticipated takings.

### 3. Military Withdrawal Land Issues

**The Sikes Act, as amended in 1989**, authorizes the Secretary of Defense to develop cooperative plans for conservation and rehabilitation programs on military reservations and to establish outdoor recreation facilities. It also authorizes the US Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to develop such cooperative plans for public lands under their jurisdiction. The Department of Defense is directed to manage the natural resources of each military reservation under its jurisdiction for the sustained multipurpose uses of those resources and to provide necessary or appropriate public access to the extent not inconsistent with the military mission of the reservation.

In 1999, President Clinton signed the Defense Authorization bill which included the renewal of the **McGregor Range Withdrawal** from public use. The Army uses the approximately 678,108-acre McGregor Range, an integral part of the Fort Bliss Range Complex, to train the nation's military forces, develop and test future concepts for fighting wars, and support the sister services and allied military education and training programs. This includes closures of portions of NM 506 and US 54 during military activities such as missile firings. The US Army administers all activities and access on McGregor Range, while the Bureau of Land Management co-manages the nonmilitary uses, subject to Army approval. The renewal of the withdrawal for 50 more years specified the continuance of grazing, protection of wildlife and their habitats, control of predatory animals, recreation, and prevention and suppression of nonmilitary-caused fires, to the extent they do not conflict with the military mission. There are 14 grazing units totaling 271,000 acres permitted in areas that have a relatively low safety risk. The range is closed

to mineral extraction, and cooperative agreements operate to manage the McGregor Black Grama Grassland Area of Critical Environmental Concern to protect valuable biological resources and study the ecology of undisturbed grassland.

#### **4. Otero County Custom and Culture**

Otero County affirms 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. Based on this, it is the County's position that all natural resource and land use planning decisions affecting the County will be guided by the principles of protecting private property rights, protecting and sustaining valuable natural resources, protecting local custom and culture, maintaining traditional economic structures through self-determination and opening new economic opportunities through reliance on free markets. The County believes that resource decisions made in this manner will sustain or enhance the environmental quality of the County.

The term "custom and culture" is an integral part of the Public Land Use element of the Otero County Comprehensive Plan because it helps to define and enhance the County's position concerning public lands within the County. Federal land use planning laws and regulations require all Federal agencies to consider the impacts of 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.

The custom and culture of Otero County is defined by the activities and values brought by residents of the past, present, and future who derive their well-being and subsistence from it. These values and activities are what make Otero County unique. The County recognizes its custom and culture is based on traditional values and activities subject to gradual, continuous change by various influences incurred by succeeding generations. The comprehensive plan, therefore, must continue to be a work in progress, reflecting changes as they occur.

Adding the term "custom" in the context of comprehensive 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 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 Otero County are still active today. They include Agriculture; Grazing and Ranching; Timber and Wood Products; Mineral Resources; Recreation; Cultural, Wildlife and Wilderness Resources.

### **C. Desired Future Conditions for Public Land Use**

Based on its custom and culture, the Otero County and its citizens support the continuous multiple use of Federal lands and all resources in Otero County. The County defines multiple use of public land in terms of management of such land and its intrinsic resources in a combination of ways to best meet present and future public needs. Multiple use is the judicious use of public land based on the ever-changing needs, conditions and desires of the public.

The County expects that based on Federal laws cited previously, Federal agencies and any State agency subject to NEPA will inform local governments of those pending actions affecting local communities and citizens economically, and coordinate and consult with them in the planning and implementation of these actions. It also expects that all Federal and State agencies subject to NEPA and other Federal laws will use as a guide the Otero County Land Use Policy Plan and Comprehensive Plan and coordinate with the County Commission in planning and managing Federal lands within the geographic boundaries of Otero County. The County also puts forth the following policies in specific areas:

### ***Land Disposition***

Otero County recognizes that land is essential to local industry and residents. Based on this, the County policy is that the design and development of all Federal land transactions, including land adjustments, purchases, disposals and exchanges, should be carried out to the benefit of Otero County citizens. It is the policy of Otero County to

- 1) Increase opportunities for local economic developments by increasing the amount of patented and non-Federal land within the County.
- 2) Federal land agencies shall not acquire any private land or rights in private lands within Otero County without first ensuring that private property interests are protected and enhanced.
- 3) Federally managed lands that are extremely difficult to manage, particularly those which lie in isolated tracts, will be targeted for disposal.
- 4) Otero County will be notified of and consulted about all Federal land adjustments in Otero County.
- 5) Before Federal Land agencies can change the local historic customs, culture and community stability of land use, the Otero County Commission may require adverse impact studies as outlined in Presidential Executive Order 12630 which requires that all Federal agencies complete a takings implication assessment (TIA) 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 Otero County. Adverse impact studies shall also address all classes of grazing rights, flood plain areas and public access.

### ***Water Resources***

Otero County recognizes that the protection and development of its water resources are essential to its short and long-term economic, recreational and cultural viability. It promotes the following policies:

- 1) The protection of existing water rights, including the head waters of our rivers and water users within the County, is of primary importance to the County's economic and cultural well-being. Therefore transfers in water use should be carefully considered in relationship to the history, traditions and culture of Otero County. Any Federally proposed designation of Wild and Scenic Rivers and all Federal policies regarding riparian management in Otero County shall be coordinated with the County and Water Users Groups in the County, and will be jointly planned with all County water use plans. In addition, Otero County, at its option, may prepare plans for the protection of all aquatic threatened and endangered species within its boundaries. Federal agencies managing waterways and wetlands containing such species will coordinate their management activities and plans with the County Commission.

- 2) Otero County may promote or pursue development of water markets for existing as well as future water rights for agricultural, municipal, industrial, and domestic purposes. In addition, Otero County may explore and promote alternative uses of water.
- 3) Otero County may promote water-based recreation within the County.
- 4) Otero County, if deemed necessary, may initiate a process for establishing geologic, hydrologic and biologic data bases within the County. The County may acquire, develop, and synthesize, alone or in coordination with other government agencies, drilling information, water well testing information, riparian vegetation information and all other information necessary for the County. The County may also develop a definition of "natural" hydrologic environment so as to assess the use of water in the County by man, vegetation, livestock and wildlife within the context of current and historical use. The County shall base its water use relationship between precipitation, surface water, ground water saline water, evapo-transpiration and water use within the County.
- 5) The Otero County government will be notified of all State, Interstate and Federal actions that have any impact on the water of the County prior to such actions being initiated. In addition, such proposed actions, including Federally Proposed Wild and Scenic River designations, will be coordinated with the Otero County Commission, and appropriate water use groups, and the County water and land use plans prior to adoption and implementation. It is the intent of the County to guide Federal and State agencies in the planning and management of the County's natural, cultural and economic resources.
- 6) Otero County recognizes the principles contained in the State Water Law as they exist at this time.
- 7) Otero County will develop its water use policy to ensure both water quality and quantity to ensure that such policy does not adversely impact water users within the County.
- 8) Otero County may develop Wild and Scenic River Designations, at its option. Federal agencies will consult and coordinate all actions with respect to the intent of local government efforts in the acceptance and enforcement of such designations. In addition, the County may, at its option, develop riparian management planning in concert with and coordinated with land owners, ranchers, the appropriate State and Federal agencies and other interested parties as long as those specific riparian issues meet National Riparian definitions.
- 9) The New Mexico Office of the State Engineer must demonstrate a diminishing water supply in specific areas before it can stop the drilling of irrigation wells.

### ***Agriculture***

The custom and culture associated with agricultural production in Otero County is necessary to the livelihood and well being of its citizens. Therefore, it is the policy of Otero 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. It will not support those unsound agricultural practices that cause watershed damage, soil erosion and reductions in water quality. It endorses the following policies:

- 1) Opportunities for grazing livestock on Federal land shall be continued at sustainable levels consistent with proper range management custom, culture and the protection of equitable property rights.
- 2) Federal and State governments will not obstruct agricultural opportunities, along with other appropriate multiple uses.

- 3) Otero County may establish a Grazing Advisory Board to help advise the Otero County Commission of equitable and feasible grazing fees, which are paid to Federal agencies, based on New Mexico State University and other economic data. These fees are to be reviewed for formula fluctuation based on cattle prices and Executive Order #12548. Federal Regulation #5985 requires under Public Rangeland Improvement Section 1, the protection of personal property grazing rights and civil rights of local citizens against any adverse economic impact. Livestock grazing on Federal lands shall continue at present levels and where conditions justify; AUMs will be increased. Federal land managing agencies shall coordinate with the County Commission on any matter affecting livestock grazing on public lands.
- 4) Otero County may develop, in coordination with Federal and State agencies, an effective Section 8 process pursuant to the Public Rangeland Improvement Act of 1978 and will implement procedures and guidelines to account for the allocation of expenditures of range improvement funds and funds collected through the Sikes Act.
- 5) Otero County will support any agencies' continued desire to explore market and incentive systems to reduce administrative and grazing cost on Federal lands.
- 6) Otero County may request the responsible agency to remove from the County, or transfer within the County, excessive numbers of all wild animals that damage private or public property within the confines of the law, that have an adverse economic impact on the County or its citizens. Otero County at its option will coordinate with the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish on the maximum and minimum hunting days for big game.
- 7) Otero County will encourage Congress to promote a wetlands policy to include only those areas that actually function as wetlands. This would allow for development of wetlands areas when overriding public need requires such development and it is offset by suitable mitigation action, 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. Otero County will be the lead agency in designating wetlands. All actions concerning wetlands will be reviewed by the County Commission prior to initiating action.
- 8) Otero County will support the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) with a memorandum of understanding between the State of New Mexico and the Bureau of Land Management and the US Department of Agriculture, and US Forest Service, to promote efficient multiple use management of the range resources in Otero County.

### ***Timber and Wood Products***

The custom and culture associated with timber and wood products production in Otero County is necessary to the livelihood and well-being of its citizens. Therefore, it is the policy of Otero County to protect timber resources and promote the continuation of a sustainable wood products industry by providing economic opportunity, relying on self-determination, and ensuring open market conditions. The following policies are promoted:

- 1) Otero County will promote sale sizes that provide opportunities for a wide spectrum of producers and that allow for local entrepreneurship, and which will provide for optimum utilization of the resource.
- 2) Opportunities for a sustainable wood products industry will be continued at levels consistent with custom and culture as affected by prevailing market conditions.
- 3) Otero County will encourage continued private use of timber products for its citizens in terms of wood fuel, Christmas trees, etc.



### ***Cultural Resources, Recreation, Wildlife, Wilderness, And Threatened And Endangered Species***

Otero County will promote and facilitate public and private recreational, cultural, wilderness, and wildlife opportunities compatible with local custom and culture and within the constraints of private property rights and local self-determination through the following policies:

- 1) Otero County shall be consulted with and may oversee the formulation of plans for the recovery of all Federal and State-listed threatened or endangered species. Otero County requires notification from agencies on recovery plans. State and Federal agencies must prove a species is endangered or threatened with full counts and historical data in Otero County.
- 2) Federal and State wildlife management and enforcement agencies will coordinate and consult with the County Commission relative to controversial matters regarding wildlife and resources. All wildlife management plans will be reviewed by the County Commission prior to finalization or initiation of actions.
- 3) There shall be no additional Federal Wilderness or park areas, or special designated areas, in Otero County without the consideration of the Board of County Commissioners of Otero County. Public lands will be managed under the multiple use theory to provide opportunities for all users of public lands.
- 4) Cultural resources will be reviewed by the County Commission or their designee to determine their value as a resource in the customs and cultures of the people of Otero County.
- 5) All proposed Sikes Act projects will be reviewed by the County Commission or their designee.
- 6) Sikes Act Funds collected in Otero County will be spent in Otero County.

### ***Mineral Resources***

Otero County recognizes that the development of its abundant hydrocarbon and mineral resources is desirable and necessary to the state and nation. Therefore, Otero County may develop procedures on site-specific plans that provide for the long-term availability and responsible development of its hydrocarbon and mineral resources. Further, it is the policy of Otero County to promote the exploration and enhance the development of its hydrocarbon and mineral resources. It endorses the following policies:

- 1) Support retention of and compliance with the 1872 Mining Law.
- 2) Otero County will adopt the Otero County Hydrocarbon and Mineral Resources Extraction Rights Protection Ordinance to protect the majority of the local tax base.
- 3) All decisions made by Federal agencies concerning the extractive industries that have an economic impact on the citizens of Otero County must be reviewed by, and coordinated with, the County Commission or their designee prior to implementation.

### ***Access and Transportation***

Otero County recognizes the need for an adequate transportation system within the county. Otero County intends to maintain and improve its valid existing rights-of-way across public and private lands accepted pursuant to the grant under Federal Revised Statute 2477, in accordance with appropriate safety standards. The County has developed and will maintain a transportation network that optimizes accessibility within the County. Costs and environmental degradation from

movement between communities and across public lands will be minimized. Otero County recognizes a need for adequate routes to transport the natural resources produced within the County as well as a need for tourism enhancement.

### ***Monitoring and Compliance***

Otero County may develop monitoring and compliance standards to evaluate this public land use plan to ensure concurrence between County, State and Federal agencies. It endorses the following policies:

- 1) Otero County may monitor, as needed, through the appropriate land user or agency, the condition of grazing lands, woodlands, wildlife, and wetlands. Federal and State agencies subject to NEPA shall provide to the County upon request any resource data in the subsequent analysis of all resource conditions.
- 2) Otero County shall enforce compliance with this public land use plan and shall monitor consistency between Federal and State actions and activities and the land use requirements enumerated herein.
- 3) The Otero County Commission, through the County Sheriff, has control of all law enforcement within Otero County, recognizing that the sheriff is the highest ranking law officer in the County.

## **D. Public Land Use Goals**

The County's goals for public land use relate to the desire to influence Federal and State policy on public lands in Otero County through the actions of the PLUAC and the County Commission.

The County's concern with public property encompasses two major issues. First the goal is to include the interests of Otero County residents in all decisions regarding the use of publicly managed lands. Second, the County's goal is to ensure that private property rights are protected or enhanced when Federal or State land agencies acquire private land rights or private lands within the County.

**PLU 1: The County Commission recognizes all private property rights as guaranteed by the US Constitution and defined by Federal and State law. The goal is to protect these property rights, while protecting the public health, safety and welfare of County residents.**

Strategy a. Review and refine the Interim Land Use Policy to clarify the County's goals and actions to be taken by the PLUAC

Strategy b. Develop a process within the County government to maintain current information regarding planning processes and proposed actions on public lands in and adjacent to Otero County.

Strategy c. Actively participate in planning processes and decision making for public lands in and adjacent to Otero County.

**PLU Goal 2. Provide for land use sustainability on public lands to maintain the custom/culture of our citizens.**

- Strategy a. Promote forest and watershed restoration.
- Strategy b. Support cattle-grazing.
- Strategy c. Support a small-diameter timber productions manufacturing industry.
- Strategy d. Facilitate easing restrictions on using resources from Federal lands.
- Strategy e. Support the beneficial use of timber that is bug-killed, diseased, dead/dying, scarified.
- Strategy f. Support removal of trees as necessary for the safety and welfare of people in Otero County.
- Strategy g. Reduce depletion rates of groundwater to sustain the custom/culture of the County.
- Strategy h. Create a regional action plan to develop both extractable and renewable minerals.
- Strategy i. Consider designating or mapping prime agriculture or grazing lands, based on soil type and availability, to aid in their preservation.

## E. Implementation of Public Land Use Goals

**Table 6-2. Implementation of Public Land Use Goals**

<b>Implementation Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
Review the Interim Land Use Policy and develop action steps consistent with the interim land use policies	County Commission/ PLUAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a plan of action for the PLUAC based on the policy recommendations in the Interim Land Use Plan and refine County goals for public lands</li> </ul>	General Fund
Maintain current information on proposed actions on public lands in the County participate in decisions related to the use of public lands	County Commission/ PLUAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Request annually to be notified by Federal and State agencies of proposed actions within or affecting Otero County</li> <li>▪ Obtain NEPA schedules from appropriate agency field offices</li> <li>▪ Participate in the planning efforts of public agencies within Otero County.</li> <li>▪ Continue and expand County involvement in National Forest program and project planning; for example; Recreation Facility Master Planning, Grazing Allotment Planning, Forest Land Management Planning, etc.</li> </ul>	General Fund

Table 6-2 Continued

Implementation Action	Responsible Agency/Organization	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
Participate in decisions related to the use of public lands	County Commission/ PLUAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Designate a representative of the PLUAC to participate in the planning efforts of public agencies within Otero County and encourage broad participation of County residents in public planning processes.</li> </ul>	General Fund
Land Use Sustainability	County Commission/ PLUAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote forest and watershed restoration.</li> <li>▪ Support cattle-grazing.</li> <li>▪ Support a small-diameter timber productions manufacturing industry.</li> <li>▪ Facilitate easing restrictions on using resources from Federal lands.</li> <li>▪ Support the beneficial use of timber that is bug-killed, diseased, dead/dying, scarified.</li> <li>▪ Support removal of trees as necessary for the safety and welfare of people in Otero County.</li> <li>▪ Reduce depletion rates of groundwater to sustain the custom/culture of the County.</li> <li>▪ Create a regional action plan to develop both extractable and renewable minerals.</li> <li>▪ Consider designating or mapping prime agriculture or grazing lands, based on soil type and availability, to aid in their preservation.</li> </ul>	General Fund



## 7. Housing

Housing is perhaps the most fundamental land use of a community. It almost always encompasses the largest area and therefore, has an important impact on the physical character of the community. Even more importantly, it has the most direct effect on the personal lives of residents, providing the place for family life and for socializing with friends.

The Housing Element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses several aspects of the County's housing supply: the number, type, and age of existing housing units; the occupancy rate; and the cost of housing for both owners and renters. It also identifies the number of new housing units that will be required in the future to meet the needs of population growth.

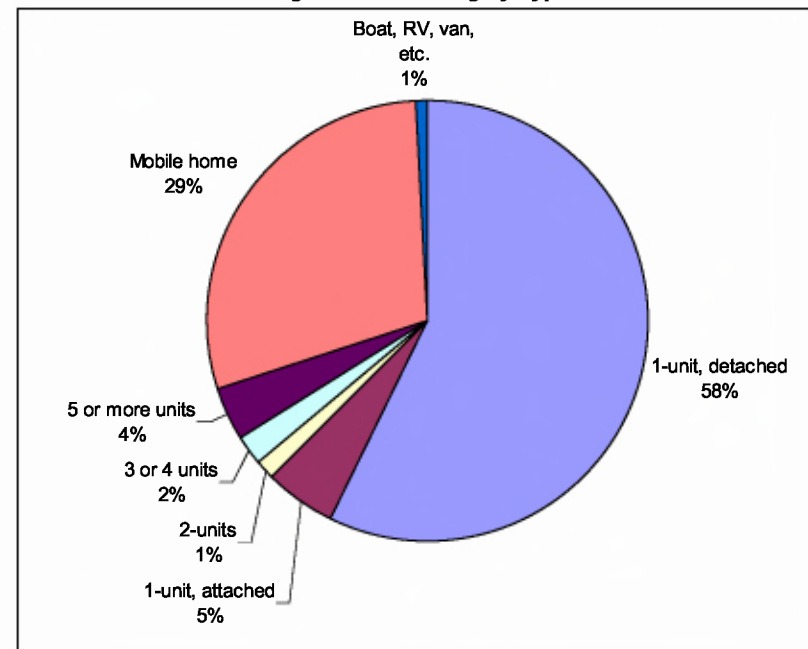
### A. Existing Housing Conditions

The 2000 US Census indicates that Otero County has a total housing inventory of 29,272 housing units. Nearly 58 percent or 16,774 units of the total housing in the County are single-family detached dwellings. Mobile homes accounted for 29 percent and multi-family units for 7.6 percent of the housing stock. In comparison, 61 percent of the housing in the State of New Mexico was single-family detached dwellings and only 18.6 percent was mobile homes based on 2000 US Census data.

The housing stock in Otero County is a mix of ages. Approximately 44 percent of the housing units were built OR within the last 20 years, and the number of homes constructed per decade has been relatively constant over the last three decades.

Occupied housing units in Otero County accounted for 78.5 percent or 22,984 of the total housing units in 2000 with vacant housing units making up the remaining 21.5 percent or 6,288 units. Of the 6,288 vacant units, 2,451 units or 8.1 percent of the County's housing stock were for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. The percentage of housing that is for seasonal use is double the percentage for the state as a whole, partly due to second homes in the Cloudcroft area. Of the other 3,837 vacant houses in the County, 53 percent were located in Alamogordo, 4.4 percent were in Tularosa, 3.2 percent were in Cloudcroft and 39 percent were in the unincorporated part of Otero County.

Figure 7-1. Housing by Type



Homeowner and rental vacancy rates for year-round housing are higher in Otero County than in the State as a whole. In Otero County 3.5 percent of homeowner housing is vacant for sale, and 16.4 percent of year-round rental housing is vacant. This compares to rates of 2.2 percent and 11.6 percent respectively for the State. Vacancy rates in New Mexico are higher than the national averages, which are 1.7 percent and 6.8 percent respectively. Typically, enough housing should be vacant so that families moving into the market have adequate housing choice at a reasonable price. In Otero County, slightly higher than average vacancy rates may be desirable to accommodate the housing needs of Holloman Air Force Base. However, excessive vacancies can be detrimental to a community's well-being, particularly if vacancies contribute to housing deterioration.

Of the 22,984 units of occupied housing in the County, 15,372 units or 66.9 percent are owner-occupied, and the remaining 33.1 percent are renter-occupied. The statewide rate of homeownership is somewhat higher, with 70 percent of housing owner-occupied and 30 percent renter-occupied.

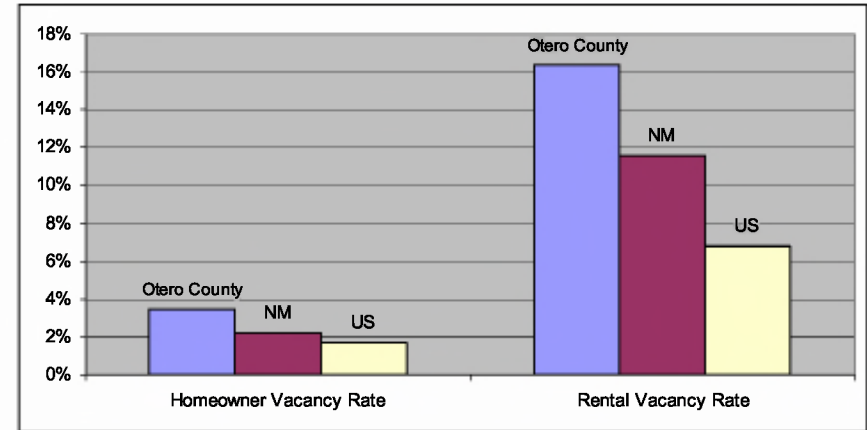
The 2000 US Census indicates that the average household size in Otero County was 2.68 persons for owner-occupied units and 2.62 persons for renter-occupied units. The average State of New Mexico household size of owner-occupied units was slightly higher at 2.72 persons and somewhat lower for renter-occupied units at 2.41 persons.

Based on the 2000 US Census, the median monthly mortgage payment in Otero County was \$758. The State of New Mexico median monthly mortgage payment was considerably higher at \$929. Median monthly rents in the County in the 2000 US Census were \$441 compared with \$503 for the State.

Based on January 2002 housing costs from the Otero County Economic Development Council website, prices range from as low as \$20,000 for a manufactured home with the land to between \$75,000 and \$125,000 for a site-built house. New construction costs for 2002 were \$65 to \$75 a square foot. The average price of homes for sale as of January 2002 was \$88,375. A typical two-bedroom apartment was renting for \$400 to \$600 per month and a three-bedroom house was renting for \$700 to \$800 a month. The low cost of manufactured homes compared to conventional construction makes this housing type an attractive option for families that cannot afford homes priced at \$75,000 or more.

Households paying more than 30 percent of their income for gross rent are generally considered to have excessive housing costs. By this measure, 28 percent of renters in Otero County were incurring excessive housing costs in 2000 which is very similar to 1990 when the figure was 27.2 percent. Among homeowners, the percentage with excessive housing costs stayed about the same, increasing from 18.2 percent to 18.7 percent in the same period.

**Figure 7-2. Vacancy Rates by Tenure, Otero Co., NM, and US**





Housing in general increased in price between 1990 and 2000, but housing costs in Otero County did not increase as fast as in the State as a whole. According to the 1990 Census, the median value of an owner-occupied house in Otero County was \$58,000. In 2000 the median value of an owner-occupied house was \$78,800, which is an increase of 35.9 percent. Overall, the median value of an owner-occupied house in New Mexico in 1990 was \$70,100 and \$108,100 in 2000, a 54.2 percent increase. The 2000 median value of an owner-occupied house in Otero County was \$29,300 less than in the State.

The Public Housing Authority of the City of Alamogordo provides services for low income renters and potential homeowners in Alamogordo. Programs include low-income rental housing, Section 8 rental assistance, homeownership assistance for first-time homebuyers, rehabilitation assistance for owner-occupied housing, and a family self-sufficiency program to help families receiving Section 8 and Public Housing assistance become economically self-sufficient.

Otero County Habitat for Humanity (HFH) works in partnership with people in need to build and renovate decent, affordable housing. Otero County Habitat for Humanity has qualified as a Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO). CHDO's are private, nonprofit organizations that must include as one of its purposes providing decent, affordable housing to low-income households. Under the Federal housing program, 15 percent of all HOME funds allocated to a participating jurisdiction—city, county, state or multi-jurisdictional consortium—are set aside for projects developed by CHDOs.

## **B. Housing Issues**

Of 3,837 vacant houses in the County that were not being used seasonally, recreationally or occasionally in 2000, approximately 2,038 were located in Alamogordo, 167 were in Tularosa, 124 were in Cloudcroft, and 1,508 were found in the unincorporated part of the County. Based on this, Steering Committee members saw distinct advantages to renovating and rehabilitating the existing housing stock: it would provide more places to live while conserving open land and landfill space and create jobs.

The Steering Committee pointed out that there are tax advantages for private rehabilitation of historic properties. These tax incentives could be publicized to encourage the rehabilitation and occupancy of historic structures. A 1992 survey of historic buildings conducted for the City of Alamogordo identifies the historic houses within the City limits.

The high percentage of mobile homes in the County is of concern, particularly since many mobile homes do not meet current building codes. The preference is to house families in high quality housing that would include conventional construction or manufactured housing that meets current HUD building standards. Mobile homes provide an affordable alternative to conventional construction, and the need for affordable housing that is of acceptable quality is an issue.

Other Steering Committee members proposed that the County assist in economic incentives to private home builders who construct homes within the reach of current infrastructure.

Housing policy outside of that affordable for lower income persons was perceived to be the purview of private enterprise.

## C. Desired Future Housing Conditions

The County's vision for housing in the future is based on the philosophy that government involvement in the housing market should focus on creating decent and affordable housing and home ownership opportunities for low and moderate income families. Market rate housing will be provided by the private sector. In the future, the following changes are desired.

- The vacancy rate for year-round housing in the County will drop to a level approaching the national average. Adequate vacant housing will be available for new families moving into the County, but there will be no long-term vacancies that result in deteriorated housing.
- Housing in the County will be maintained in good condition. Over time, deteriorated or inadequate housing will be renovated or replaced.
- Affordable homes will be available to moderate income families in the County, and local agencies and organizations will make homeownership assistance available to all eligible families.
- New housing will be located to take advantage of existing infrastructure.

## D. Housing Goals

- HG 1. Promote the full utilization of the existing housing stock. The goal is to promote rehabilitation of existing housing in the County.**
- Strategy a. Publicize tax advantages available for rehabilitating historic homes.
  - Strategy b. Educate residents on home maintenance and training on minor repairs and encourage residents to maintain homes to building code standards.
  - Strategy c. Inventory the condition of vacant housing in the unincorporated part of the County to assess for historical value and code violations.
    - Work with property owners to rehabilitate properties so they can be made available for occupancy.
- HG 2. Promote the development of new housing that is affordable to moderate income families in Otero County.**
- Strategy a. Endorse the work of the Habitat for Humanity and work with this organization to provide affordable homes to qualified families in Otero County.
  - Strategy b. Establish standards for mobile homes located in the County based on *age and condition of the mobile homes*.

**HG 3. Promote homeownership in Otero County.**

Strategy a. Educate moderate income County residents about availability of home ownership programs to encourage home ownership in the County.

**HG 4. Cooperate with the municipalities in promoting infill housing development to maximize use of existing infrastructure before constructing new infrastructure.**

Strategy a. Consider assisting in incentives for private developers who construct infill housing. Examples of incentives include expedited subdivision or permit review or reduced fees.

## **E. Implementation of Housing Goals**

A variety of resources are available in Otero County for meeting the housing needs of low-to-moderate income families. The City of Alamogordo Housing Authority and Otero County Habitat for Humanity (HFH) are two agencies that provide services in the County. While the housing authority is established to serve City residents, HFH serves the entire County. Other state and federal agencies have programs to meet the need for decent, affordable housing. The NM Mortgage Finance Authority and USDA Rural Development offer home ownership programs that will provide grants and or loans to families for purchasing a home. These programs have established income limits in order to develop a package that is affordable for the family.

Table 7-1 lists ongoing implementation actions, responsibilities and potential funding sources to meet the County's housing goals.

**Table 7-1. Implementation of Housing Goals**

<b>Implementation Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
Inventory condition of vacant housing	County Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Assess vacant properties for historical value and code violations. Work with property owners to bring them up to code to allow them to be inhabited.</li></ul>	General Fund
Rehabilitation of Historic Homes	County Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work with housing agencies in Otero County to develop an information package regarding incentives for renovating historic structures. Make the package available through County facilities.</li></ul>	General Fund

Table 7-1 Continued

Implementation Action	Responsible Agency/Organization	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
Home Maintenance and Repair	County Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information regarding home maintenance and repair grants offered by existing agencies; provide information on basic home repair classes.</li> </ul>	General Fund
Development of New Housing Affordable to Moderate Income Families	County Commission, Otero County Habitat for Humanity, City of Alamogordo Housing Authority, New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority, USDA Rural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Habitat for Humanity to identify County residents who qualify for home ownership under HFH guidelines and assist in finding financial partners and volunteers</li> </ul>	General Fund; Agency Funds
Manufactured Home Ordinance and Design Standards	County Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a Manufactured Homes Ordinance that</li> <li>sets development standards for manufactured home parks and establishes minimum standards for manufactured homes placed on residential properties in the County</li> </ul>	CDBG and/or General Fund
Homeownership Education	Otero County Habitat for Humanity; City of Alamogordo Housing Authority, New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority, USDA Rural Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate moderate income County residents about availability of home ownership programs to encourage home ownership in the County; direct qualified families to existing housing agencies for information on homeownership programs.</li> </ul>	General Fund; Agency Funds
Infill Housing Incentives	County Commission in partnership with municipalities and private utility systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with municipalities and private utilities to identify locations in growing unincorporated areas with existing utility service and access; review potential incentives to builders.</li> </ul>	General Fund; Housing Grants

## 8. Economic Development

The local economy helps determine the rate of growth in a community, the prosperity of its residents, and the amount of resources available to the County government to carry out physical and other improvements.

The Economic Development Element of the Comprehensive Plan addresses several aspects of the County's economy: income levels of residents, jobs and employment, the inventory of existing businesses, and recreation and tourism opportunities. It identifies obstacles hindering the expansion of business activity in the community. It also recommends business development initiatives to meet the everyday needs of residents and to create a more attractive destination for visitors.

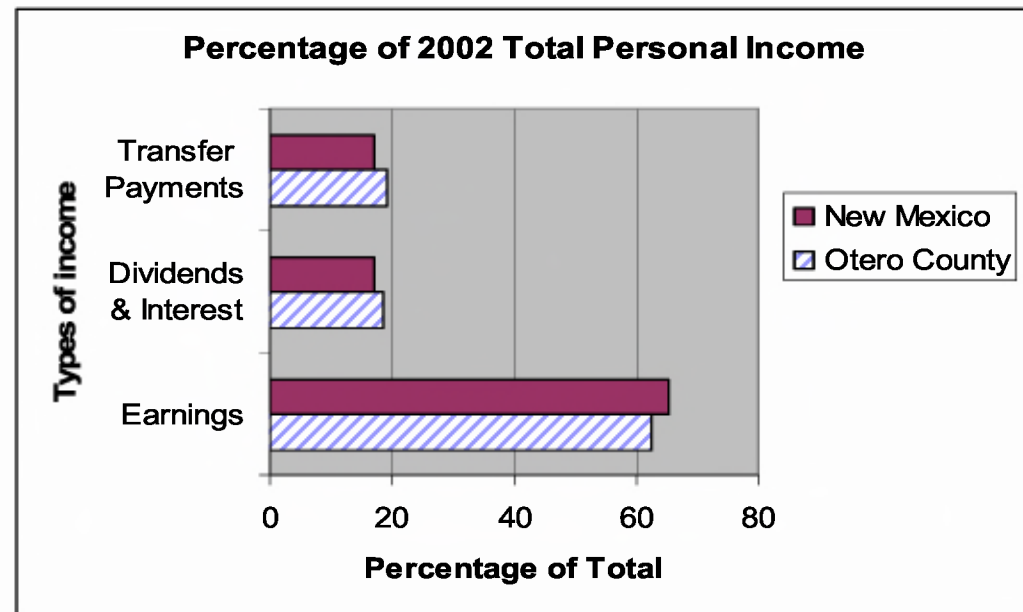
### A. Existing Economic Conditions

#### 1. Personal Income

Based on 2000 US Census data, the median household income in Otero County was \$30,861. This is 90.4 percent of the median household income of \$34,133 for the State of New Mexico. In Otero County, 8,986 households or 39 percent of the total population earned less than \$24,999 annually, 8,291 households or 36 percent earned \$25,000 to \$49,999, and 5,707 households or 24.9 percent earning \$50,000 or more. Otero County had a slightly higher proportion of lower income households than in the State where 36.7 percent of households earned \$25,000 or less, 31.4 percent earned \$25,000 to \$49,999, and 31.9 percent earned \$50,000 or more. The median family income in Otero County was \$34,781 or 88.2 percent of the overall State median family income of \$39,425 in 2000.

Per capita personal income in the County in 2000 was \$16,929 or 76 percent of that for State. By 2003, per capita personal income had risen to \$19,831 and reached 79 percent of the State average of \$24,995. The 2003 per capita personal

Figure 8-1. Sources of Personal Income in Otero County



Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis

income reflected an increase of 4.3 percent from 2002, compared with 3.2 percent for the State and 2.2 percent nationally (BEA 2002).

In 2003, Otero County had a total personal income (TPI) of \$1,230, 675,000. This includes net earnings by place of residence; dividends, interest and rent; and personal current transfer receipts (payments from government such as retirement, Medicare and Medicaid, unemployment benefits, veterans' benefits, and from business, such as liability payments and corporate gifts to nonprofits). Net earnings in 2003 accounted for 64.2 percent of TPI (down from 68.6 % in 1993); dividends, interest and rent were 16.0 percent (down slightly from 17% in 1993); and transfer receipts were 19.8 percent (up from 13.64.0 % in 1993). Compared with the State of New Mexico, Otero County received slightly more personal income from dividends, interest and rent and transfer payments and slightly less from net earnings than the State as a whole.

More than 19 percent (11,737) of individuals and 15.6 percent (2,644) of families in Otero County had incomes below the Federal poverty level in 1999. This is slightly more than the 18.4 percent of individuals and 14.5 percent of families in the State whose incomes fell below the Federal poverty level in 1999. Of the families in Otero County below the Federal poverty level, over 79 percent were households with related children under the age of 18. The Federal Government in 2000 determined that the annual poverty level threshold of an individual was \$8,794. The poverty level threshold for a family of four with two children under the age of 18 was \$17,463.

## **2. County Labor Force and Occupations**

Of the Otero County population ages 16 and over, 59.8 percent or 27,478 persons were in the labor force in 2000. Approximately 47.8 percent of the workforce (21,934 persons) were employed in the civilian labor force, 7.8 percent (3,599 persons) were in the Armed Forces, and 4.2 percent (1,945) were unemployed. Women made up 50.7 percent of the total labor force and 47.9 percent of the civilian labor force (US Census 2000)

More than 28 percent of employed County residents worked in management, professional, or related occupations, and some 22 percent worked in sales and office occupations, less than in the State as a whole. By contrast, a higher percentage of residents in the County than the State worked in service occupations (18.8 %), construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations (16.3 %) and production, transportation, and material moving occupations (13%).

Private businesses accounted for the largest proportion (60.8 percent) of wages and salaries for Otero County residents (2000 Census). An additional 29.3 percent had government jobs and 9.4 percent were self-employed.

Of the employed civilian population in the County, 20.1 percent were employed in educational, health or social services, slightly less than in the State as a whole. Another 12.7 percent were employed in retail trade and 12.3 percent worked in public administration. Residents also held jobs in arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services (10 percent), construction (9 percent), manufacturing (7.4 percent) and professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (6.5 percent). Compared with the State, Otero County residents had more jobs in public administration, construction; manufacturing, transportation, and warehousing and utilities. They had less employment in professional and management, information, and finance and insurance.

### 3. County Industries, Jobs, and Earnings

In 2002, government provided nearly 40 percent of the jobs in the County with the military accounting for nearly 16 percent and State and local government 17 percent. Federal civilian jobs accounted for seven percent. The percentages of total earnings of these industries in the County were even higher, 60 percent for government overall, with nearly 30 percent for the military, and 16.8 percent for State and local government combined.

The next largest number of jobs was in retail trade (11 percent) and health care and social assistance (9 percent) although both provided only 6.7 percent of industry earnings. Providing 5 to 6 percent of jobs (but 4 percent or less of earnings) were administrative and waste services, accommodation and food services, construction, and other services, except public administration.

While farming provided only 2 percent of the jobs in the County, and an even smaller percentage of earnings, it also spawns related services and helps attract tourists. Otero's orchards grow pecans and pistachios, apples and cherries. The County also grows alfalfa, pumpkins, and has several ranches and wineries.

This indicates that despite some diversification, the County is still very dependent on Holloman Air Force Base for its economy.

**Table 8-1. Otero County Jobs and Earnings by Industry (2002)**

<b>2002 Otero County Jobs</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent of Total</b>	<b>2002 Otero County Earnings by Industry (\$1,000's)</b>	<b>Income</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Total Employment (by place of work)</b>	<b>27,515</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>Earnings by industry (place of work)</b>	<b>\$863,407</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Government and government enterprises	10,862	39.5%	Government and government enterprises	\$518,300	60.0%
Military	4,283	15.6%	Military	\$256,197	29.7%
Local government	3,675	13.4%	Local government	\$117,769	13.6%
Retail trade	2,920	10.6%	Federal, civilian	\$117,050	13.6%
Health care & social assistance	2,349	8.5%	Health care & social assistance	\$57,953	6.7%
Federal, civilian	1,957	7.1%	Retail Trade	\$57,923	6.7%
Administrative & waste services	1,615	5.9%	Administrative & waste services	\$38,134	4.4%
Accommodation & food services	1,481	5.4%	Construction	\$36,556	4.2%
Construction	1,338	4.9%	Professional & tech. services	\$29,782	3.4%
Other services, except public administration	1,294	4.7%	State government	\$27,284	3.2%
Professional and technical services	1,012	3.7%	Transportation & Warehousing	\$23,534	2.7%
Real estate, rental, leasing	947	3.4%	Other services, except public administration	\$19,752	2.3%
State government	947	3.4%	Finance & Insurance	\$17,364	2.0%
Transportation and warehousing	731	2.7%	Accommodation & food services	\$15,635	1.8%
Finance & insurance	678	2.5%	Manufacturing	\$12,360	1.4%



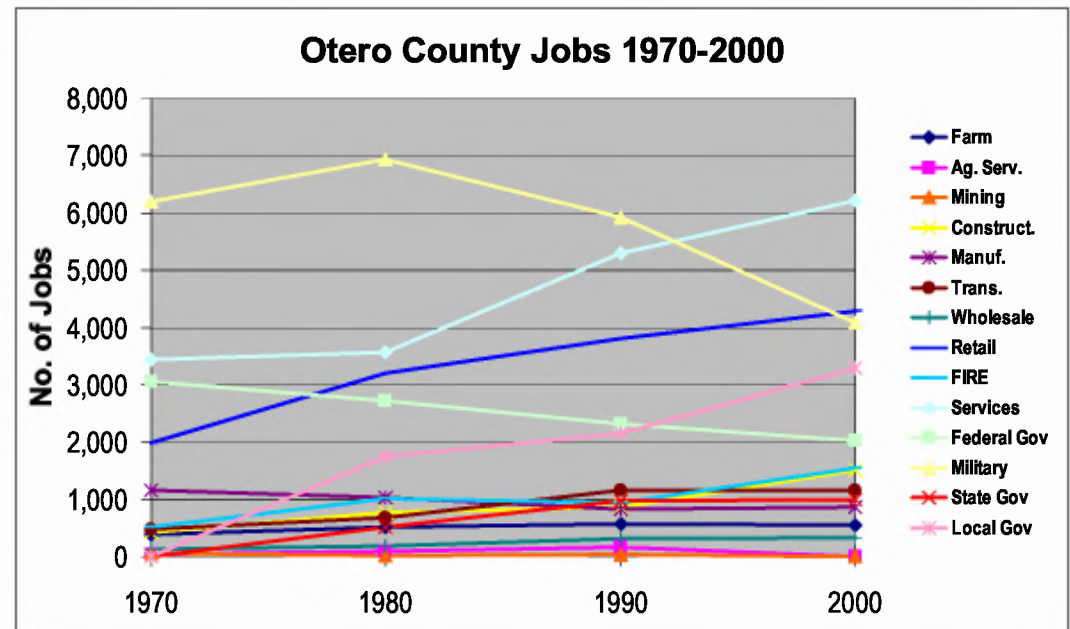
2002 Otero County Jobs	Number	Percent of Total	2002 Otero County Earnings by Industry (\$1,000's)	Income	Percent
Farm Employment	544	2.0%	Information	\$9,680	1.1%
Manufacturing	433	1.6%	Real estate, rental, leasing	\$7,286	0.8%
Information	296	1.1%	Utilities	\$4,480	0.5%
Wholesale trade	246	0.9%	Wholesale trade	\$4,094	0.5%
Arts, entertainment, & recreation	232	0.8%	Educational services	\$2,358	0.3%
Educational services	116	0.4%	Management of companies & enterprises	\$1,720	0.2%
Utilities	77	0.3%	Arts, entertainment, & recreation	\$1,605	0.2%
Management of companies & enterprises	51	0.2%	Farm earnings	\$415	0.0%
Forestry, fishing, related activities, other*	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Forestry, fishing, related activities, other*	Undisclosed	Undisclosed
Mining*	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Mining*	Undisclosed	Undisclosed

Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis 2002

#### 4. County Job Trends

In 2000, there were a total of 27,278 full-time and part-time jobs in Otero County. The number of jobs in the County increased by 375 jobs a year between 1970 and 1980, for an average growth rate of 1.8 percent a year. The rate slowed to 0.98 percent between 1980 and 1990 and 0.74 percent between 1990 and 2000. (US Bureau of Economic Analysis 1970-2000.) Employment in all government enterprises accounted for half the total jobs at least through 1980, with two percent in farm employment and the rest in the private sector. That had reversed by 1990, when the percentage of jobs in the private sector outstripped the government by eight percent. The gulf widened further by 2000, with private employment accounting for nearly 60 percent of jobs. In the government sector, the military accounted for 32 percent of the jobs in 1970, shrinking to 15 percent by 2000. The number of Federal civilian jobs also fell over the 30-year period, while jobs in State and particularly local government made up an increasing share. Jobs also increased in services; wholesale and retail trade; local government; finance real estate and insurance; transportation and public utilities; and construction.

Figure 8-2. Otero County Jobs 1970-2000



**Table 8-2. Otero County Jobs 1970-2000**

Otero County Job Trends 1970-2000	Number of Jobs				Percentage of Total			
	1970	1980	1990	2000	1970%	1980%	1990%	2000%
Total full-time & part-time employment	19,222	22,977	25,322	27,278	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Non-farm employment	18,837	22,465	24,761	26,723	98.0%	97.8%	97.8%	98.0%
Wage & salary employment	17,746	20,613	21,901	21,645	92.3%	89.7%	86.5%	79.3%
Government & government enterprises	10,621	11,922	11,354	10,402	55.3%	51.9%	44.8%	38.1%
Private employment	8,216	10,543	13,407	16,321	42.7%	45.9%	52.9%	59.8%
Military	6,194	6,934	5,917	4,090	32.2%	30.2%	23.4%	15.0%
Services	3,444	3,565	5,290	6,223	17.9%	15.5%	20.9%	22.8%
Federal, civilian	3,052	2,718	2,315	2,025	15.9%	11.8%	9.1%	7.4%
Retail trade	1,993	3,191	3,816	4,286	10.4%	13.9%	15.1%	15.7%
Proprietors employment	1,476	2,364	3,421	5,633	7.7%	10.3%	13.5%	20.7%
State & local government	1,375	2,270	3,122	4,287	7.2%	9.9%	12.3%	15.7%
Non-farm proprietors employment 2/	1,189	1,965	2,969	5,176	6.2%	8.6%	11.7%	19.0%
Local government	unavailable	1,749	2,147	3,294	unavailable	7.6%	8.5%	12.1%
Manufacturing	1,166	1,029	825	872	6.1%	4.5%	3.3%	3.2%
Finance, insurance, real estate	512	1,017	932	1,553	2.7%	4.4%	3.7%	5.7%
Transportation & public utilities	470	674	1,163	1,166	2.4%	2.9%	4.6%	4.3%
Construction	421	774	870	1,514	2.2%	3.4%	3.4%	5.6%
State government	unavailable	521	975	993	unavailable	2.3%	3.9%	3.6%
Farm employment	385	512	561	555	2.0%	2.2%	2.2%	2.0%
Farm proprietors employment	287	399	452	457	1.5%	1.7%	1.8%	1.7%
Wholesale trade	125	180	307	332	0.7%	0.8%	1.2%	1.2%
Mining	51	17	42	undisclosed	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	undisclosed
Agricultural services, forestry, fishing, other 3/	34	96	162	undisclosed	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	undisclosed

Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis

Of the basic industries that drive the economy, military employment, Federal civilian employment, and manufacturing jobs have decreased over time, while State government, farm employment, administrative and waste services, and tourism have increased somewhat. This would seem to indicate some needed diversification, but overall slow economic growth. Rough calculations indicate that about 0.89 jobs are created by each basic job in the economy here. The

government's recent change to the more detailed North American Industry Classification system (NAICS) from the Standard Industrial Classification System (SIC) in 2001 as a way to measure industry jobs will make it easier to measure growth in tourism and in the nascent film industry.

## 5. Major Employers in Otero County

### ***Military Installations***

The US military is a major economic engine for Otero County. Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range combined make up a military/civilian annual payroll of more than \$255 million and an economic impact of over \$485 million to the local economy.

- **White Sands Missile Range** – Located west of White Sands National Monument and 47 miles from Alamogordo, White Sands Missile Range is the premier test range in the world. Covering over two million acres, this Army installation range does testing for government agencies, the Department of Defense, private entities, and foreign countries. Programs like the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), Patriot, Army Tactical Missile System, and the Theater High Altitude Area Defense System (THAAD) are routinely tested at the missile range. White Sands is also home to the Trinity Site, where the world's first atomic bomb was detonated on July 16, 1945. A national historic landmark, the Trinity Site is open for public viewing on the first Saturday in April and the first Saturday in October and receives approximately 2,000 visitors per visit per day. Launch Complex 33 is also a national historic landmark.
- **Holloman Air Force Base** – For safety reasons, it is the responsibility of Holloman Air Force Base to control the air space above HAFB and White Sands Missile Range. The 9,200-acre air base, west of Alamogordo, is home to the world's only wing of F-117A Stealth Fighters. There are three squadrons that regularly fly the Stealth and other squadrons that fly the T-38 A Talon. Holloman Air Force Base is also home to the 46<sup>th</sup> Test Group which manages the ten-mile-long high speed test track, a Global Positioning Systems test bed, radar signature test platform, and is developing a Magnetic Levitation (MagLev) track.
- **German Air Force** – The German Air Force maintains a flight training center at Holloman Air Force Base which was activated in 1996. Currently, the program consists of 680 military personnel plus families and is structured to train German Air Force pilots to fly TORNADO Fighter Aircraft. German aircrews come to Holloman Air Force Base for three weeks to participate in advanced tactics training and then return to Germany. The German Air Force also conducts a Fighter Weapons Instructor Course which lasts six months. All expenses are paid by the German government and all military personnel are subject to the laws of the United States government.
- **Naval Air Warfare Center** – Naval activity at White Sands began in June 1946 when the Navy participated in the research and testing of captured German V-2 rockets. Today, the mission of the Naval Air Warfare Center is land-based testing of naval weapon system missiles and gun munitions as well as launch operations for sub-orbital space systems and research rockets. Naval facilities include the L.L.S. (Land-locked ship) Desert Ship which serves as the primary live fire test bed for today's surface-to-air weapons including Standard Missile and Evolved Seasparrow Missile (ESSM).

## 6. Shopping, Dining, and Lodging

Otero County offers a number of restaurants, which are located mainly within the cities and towns. Alamogordo, with 68 restaurants, offers the most variety. Nine restaurants are available in Cloudcroft, seven in Tularosa, and one each in Weed, High Rolls and Timberon. For lodging, there are 27 hotels, motels or inns; 28 cabins or other retreats; 29 campgrounds and six bed and breakfasts.

A variety of shopping opportunities and experiences exist throughout Otero County. White Sands Mall, the major shopping center in Otero County, is over 250,000 square feet of enclosed shopping and contains more than 20 stores and a five-screen cinema theater. The mall is located at the north end of Alamogordo at 3199 North White Sands Blvd. Major national retailers are found in Alamogordo. In addition, a variety of shops are located in the Downtown area of Alamogordo near 10<sup>th</sup> Street and New York Avenue.

The community's financial and business district, as well as the local government offices, are also located in this area.

## 7. Tourism and Recreation

Tourism is one of Otero's County biggest industries. Many opportunities exist for tourists and residents to visit, explore, and enjoy. Some of the major tourist and recreation attractions are listed below.

- **La Luz** – Located four miles north of Alamogordo, La Luz, meaning “the light,” is the oldest settlement in the Tularosa Basin. Its name probably dates from 1719 when Franciscan missionaries built a chapel dedicated to “Our Lady of Light” (Nuestra Senora de la Luz). In 1863 settlers from areas on the Rio Grande near Socorro settled here. La Luz is now a quiet plaza surrounded by a few old adobe buildings, homes, and artist studios,
- **Tularosa** – A small village 13 miles north of Alamogordo, Tularosa, known as the City of Roses, has been successful in blending the new with the old. Along Granado Street, visitors will find an assortment of shops housed in original Village buildings. The Catholic Church, St. Francis de Paula, was built as a fulfillment to promises made by Tularosa citizens when they defeated the Apaches at the “Battle of Round Mountain.”
- **Cloudcroft** – Surrounded by Lincoln National Forest and set at 9,000 feet, Cloudcroft enjoys a temperate climate and great natural beauty. The Village was established in 1898, and the downtown business district offers a unique western motif boardwalk with a variety of retail shops, art studios, and cafes. Originally constructed in 1899, the historic Lodge Hotel is still in use today. Visitors can enjoy golf in the summer and skiing in the winter at Ski Cloudcroft, a small ski resort that offers downhill skiing, snowboarding, tubing, and night skiing.
- **Mescalero Apache Reservation** – The Mescalero Apache Reservation is over 460,000 acres of pine forests and mountains that spans Otero County near Ruidoso. The Mescalero Apache Reservation offers the following services and amenities.
  - **Ski Apache** – Ski Apache offers skiing and snowboarding opportunities on over 750 acres. Ski Apache is the second largest ski resort in New Mexico and has 11 ski lifts – 1 gondola, 2 quads, 5 triples, 1 double, and 2 surface lifts with a lift capacity of 16,500 skiers per hour.

Other amenities include two cafeterias, three snack bars, two burger stands, ski and snowboard lessons, and various ski shops. Annually, Ski Apache averages 200,000 skier visits per winter.

- *Mescalero Apache Cultural Center* – The Mescalero Apache Cultural Center features photo exhibits, basketry, and clothing of the three Apache tribes indigenous to the area.
  - *Inn of the Mountain Gods Golf Course* – An 18-hole championship golf course built around a man-made lake and ranked among the top 20 resort golf courses in the United States.
  - *Inn of the Mountain Gods Resort and Casino* – The Mescalero tribe has completed a world-class resort that opened in 2005. Included at the resort is a new 50,000-square-foot casino that will contain up to 1,500 slot machines, 34 gaming tables, and room for keno and bingo.
  - *Casino Apache Travel Center* – Brand new travel center that opened May 22, 2003.
  - Outdoor activities available at the Mescalero Reservation include: big game hunting, seasonal hunts, hunting packages for elk, bear, turkey, sporting clays, fishing, horseback riding, hiking, and other activities.
- ***New Mexico Museum of Space History*** – The New Mexico Museum of Space History is home to the space museum, the Tombaugh Planetarium/IMAX Theater, Hubbard Space Science Education Facility, and International Space Hall of Fame. Located in Alamogordo since 1976, the museum celebrates man's exploration of space and its mission is to preserve and interpret the history, technology, and science of the "space age". The space museum's five-story golden building features exhibits ranging from Robert Goddard's early rocket experiments near Roswell to mock-ups of future space stations. Also on display is the rocket sled that made John P. Stapp the "Fastest Man Alive" when he rode it to 632 miles per hour in 1954. Built in 1980, the Tombaugh Planetarium/IMAX Theater houses a 40-foot diameter tilted dome theater and is named after the man who discovered Pluto. The Hubbard Space Science Educational Facility is home to the museum's educational programs and educates over 700 students each summer in the week-long Space Camp. The museum is open seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (closed Thanksgiving and Christmas). It is the third most visited museum in New Mexico, and annually receives about 200,000 visitors to the museum and IMAX Theater.
  - ***White Sands National Monument*** – One of the world's great natural wonders, White Sands National Monument rises from the heart of the Tularosa Basin. Covering over 275 miles, the large wave-like dunes of gypsum sand and the surrounding plant and animal community have been preserved forever for visitors to explore and discover. Some of the recreational opportunities at White Sands include: sightseeing along Dunes Drive, hiking, backcountry camping, and picnicking in the Heart of the Dunes area. In addition to the natural wonders of the area, the National Monument includes a visitor center that houses a museum, information desk, book store, gift shop, and restrooms.
  - ***Lincoln National Forest*** – Located in south central New Mexico and covering over 1,103,441 acres, Lincoln National Forest is the birthplace of the original Smokey Bear, the living symbol of the campaign to prevent forest fires. The national forest consists of three ranger districts – the Sacramento, Smokey Bear, and the Guadalupe. The Supervisor's Office for all of Lincoln National Forest is based in Alamogordo in the old US Post Office. The Smokey Bear Ranger District is headquartered in Ruidoso and manages over 375,000 acres. There are two wilderness areas with over 86,000 acres as well as the Ski Apache Resort located in this district. Elevations in the district range from 5,400 to 11,580 feet with vegetation

varying from semi-desert plants, pinon pine to spruce, and high-elevation grasses. Outdoor activities include: camping, fishing, hiking, backpacking, scenic views, wilderness, and skiing. The Sacramento Ranger District in Cloudcroft manages over 450,419 acres and includes opportunities for camping, picnicking, fishing, hunting, hiking, and skiing as well as self-guided tours at the Sacramento Peak Observatory. Containing many limestone caves and deep rough canyons, the Guadalupe Ranger District in Carlsbad, is the perfect place for visitors to “get away from it all”. The varied terrain includes the Guadalupe Mountains ranging in elevations from 3,500 to 7,500 feet as well as deep canyons and sheer cliffs in the southern portion of the district.

- **Valley of Fires Recreation Area** – Managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Valley of Fires Recreation Area in nearby Lincoln County offers visitors a chance to explore the most recent lava flow in the Continental US. The lava flow is over 44 miles long and is estimated to be 1,500 to 2,000 years old. The recreation area is located four miles northwest of Carrizozo and allows camping and day use. The three-quarter-mile long Malpais Nature Trail is a popular hike that provides a close-up of the lava formations.
- **Oliver Lee Memorial State Park** – Named after one of New Mexico’s most colorful characters, the Oliver Lee Memorial State Park is nestled at the mouth of Dog Canyon 12 miles south of Alamogordo. Set in a quiet, green oasis, Dog Canyon is a deep ravine where water flows year-round and ferns cling to the rocky cliffs. Guided tours of the restored Lee ranch is a major attraction of the park as well as the hiking trails, visitor center, picnic areas, and 44 developed campsites. The park, open year-round, covers over 640 acres and received over 41,000 visits in 2001.
- **Bonito Lake** – Owned by the City of Alamogordo and ten miles north of the Village of Ruidoso in nearby Lincoln County, Bonito Lake serves as a potable water supply and recreational area. The Bonito Lake Recreational Area is open to the public from April 1 to November 30. Though swimming and boating are not permitted at the lake, activities like fishing, camping, and hiking are allowed.
- **Alameda Park and Zoo** – Established in 1898, Alameda Park and Zoo is the oldest zoo in the Southwest. The zoo is home to over 300 animals of 90 different species. Included at the zoo is a playground and picnic area. The park and zoo is open every day of the year except Christmas and New Year’s Day from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. There were over 54,000 visits to the park and zoo in 2001.
- **Founders Park** – Created in 1998 to celebrate Alamogordo’s centennial, Founders Park aims to honor the three cultures – Native American, Spanish Conquistador, and American Cowboy – most responsible for the establishment of the City. The park is located at the corner of White Sands Blvd. and 10<sup>th</sup> Street and is open to the public to view several bronze sculptures created by local artists.
- **Alamogordo Airborne Park** – This monument is dedicated to a small area of Alamogordo called “Chihuahita,” which is approximately one-quarter square mile in size. It produced 56 airborne para troopers in World War II, the largest concentration of its kind in the US.



- ***Kids Kingdom*** – A children’s playground in Alamogordo offering a challenging and imaginative playscape. Picnic facilities are also available. The playground is located off Indian Wells Road between Oregon and Washington Avenues.
- ***Flickinger Center for Performing Arts*** – In 1988 Margaret Flickinger purchased the 700-seat Sierra movie theater in Alamogordo. After the subsequent purchase, she donated the theater to the non-profit Alamogordo Civic Auditorium, Inc. and thus became the Flickinger Center for Performing Arts. Since that time, the theater has been renovated to include a 40-foot by 32-foot stage, orchestra pit, dressing rooms, wardrobe room-orchestra room, and various lighting elements. The Flickinger Center is home to the Community Concert Series, the Alamogordo Music Theatre, the Cloudcroft Dance Theatre, the Magic of Dance and Twirl, New Voice Theatre, the Academy of Ballet, and the Miss New Mexico Scholarship Pageant. Additionally, local schools can use the theater free of charge.
- ***Tularosa Basin Historical Museum*** – The mission of the Tularosa Basin Historical Museum is to preserve and promote local, regional, and occasionally national history through exhibits, projects, presentations, and other methods. The museum is located at 1301 North White Sands Blvd. in Alamogordo adjacent to the Alameda Park and Zoo. The museum maintains a large display of articles and photos on the early history of the area as well as one of only two 47-Star US flags. Admission is free to the museum and the hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturdays.
- ***Sacramento Mountains Museum*** – Located in Cloudcroft, the Sacramento Mountains Museum is a collection of historic buildings constructed in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Displays include old-time farming and ranching tools and equipment, a display of the Cloud-Climbing Railroad which helped make Cloudcroft a reality and a wide array of artifacts and memorabilia from Cloudcroft and surrounding communities. Collections and displays are accompanied by audio tapes and written histories, microfilmed newspapers, maps, books, and photographs.
- ***Tularosa Vineyards and Winery*** – This small family-owned vineyard and winery is located two miles north of the Village of Tularosa on Highway 54. The winery, operated by the Wickham Family, produces primarily varietal wines from vinifera grapes. The winery is open year-round from noon to 5 p.m. daily and includes opportunities for tours, wine tasting, and relaxing at the picnic tables under the shade of the pecan trees.
- ***The Toy Train Depot*** – A 100-year old train depot, the Toy Train Depot in Alamogordo is home to hundreds of model and toy trains as well as a 1,000-square-foot HO layout depicting Alamogordo in the 1940s. In addition, the Depot houses the smallest scaled working train in the world and provides small-scale train rides every half hour circling Alameda Park and Zoo. Hours of operation are Wednesday through Sunday noon to 5 p.m.
- ***Apache Point Observatory and National Solar Observatory*** – The Apache Point Observatory and National Solar Observatory are located 18 miles south of Cloudcroft in Sunspot. The National Solar Observatory is managed by the National Science Foundation and used for solar research during the day. New Mexico State University administers the Apache Point Observatory to explore the skies by night. At 9,200 feet, Apache Point



provides an excellent location due to its clear weather, little water vapor, and dark night skies. Together, both facilities provide over 70 jobs. The facilities are open to visitors during daylight hours.

- **Eagle Ranch Pistachio Groves** – Home to over 12,000 pistachio trees, Eagle Ranch contains the first pistachio trees planted in New Mexico in 1972. Various varieties of flavored pistachios as well of a line of pistachio candies, cookies, and ice cream are available at the retail store on the farm or through mail order.
- **McGinn's Pistachio Tree Ranch and Arena Blanca Winery** – Located six miles north of Alamogordo, McGinn's Pistachio Tree Ranch is home to more than 12,500 pistachio trees on 94 acres, New Mexico's largest contiguous planting of pistachio groves, and 14 acres of wine grapes. The ranch is open for tours and operates two retail stores offering pistachios, pistachio-related products, and an assortment of wines.
- **Sertoma Speedway** – The Sertoma Motorplex sits on approximately 640 acres about four miles north of Tularosa on Hwy 54. The track is a three-eight-mile semi-banked dirt oval.

### **Golf Courses**

- **Desert Lakes Municipal Golf Course** – An 18-hole, championship golf course in Alamogordo, this course is quickly becoming one of southern New Mexico's finest. This course, recently renovated, is open year-round seven days a week and features a lighted driving range, pro-shop, golf lessons, and restaurant and bar. Fees are \$20 per adult for non-residents and \$18 per adult for residents.
- **The Lodge Golf Course** – This 9-hole golf course in Cloudcroft is one of the highest in the world at 9,000 feet and a premier attraction in the Southwest. The course is based on old Scottish traditions of playing different tees and separate flags on each hole, thus the layout can accommodate a challenging 18-hole round. Rates range from \$15 for 9-holes to \$30 for an 18-hole round.
- **Inn of the Mountain Gods Golf Course** – (See description above under Mescalero Apache Reservation).
- **White Sands Missile Range Golf Course** – This 9-hole golf course is located on the White Sands Missile Range in Dona Ana County.
- **Ponderosa Pines Golf Course** – Located in the middle of Lincoln National Forest approximately nine miles south of Cloudcroft at 8,000 feet, this 9-hole course is very narrow and challenging. Green fees range in price from \$12 for a 9-hole round to \$18 for 18-holes.
- **Timberon Golf Course** – This 9-hole course in Timberon offers golfers a challenging round of golf in a beautiful setting. Rates range from \$11 for 9-holes to \$15 for an 18-hole round.

## B. Economic Development Issues

Otero County's economic strengths derive largely from its Department of Defense, Research, Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) and scientific establishments, particularly Holloman Air Force Base which employed more than 8,000 military and civilian workers in Fiscal 2003 for a gross payroll of more than \$255 million and a total economic impact of more than \$485 million, according to the FY 2003 Economic Impact Statement from Holloman AFB FY 2003. The German Air Force, which employed 682 active duty personnel living on and off the base, is part of this.

At the same time, dependence on the military leaves the County's economy subject to the vagaries of the US Government's plans. The periodic base realignment and closure (BRAC) process is partly political and cannot be predicted. In the most recent round of proposed military base closures and realignments announced in the summer of 2005, Holloman would lose only 17 military personnel when the physiological training unit is relocated to Wright-Patterson AFB in Ohio. White Sands Missile Range would lose 13 military and 165 civilian positions when its Army Research Lab is moved to Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland. Fort Bliss, on the other hand, would gain a number of units as it is transformed from an institutional training installation into a heavy-maneuver installation that serves as home to operational Army units, including those returning from Korea and Germany.

Thus, leaders in the County and Alamogordo have been trying to diversify the economic base for some time. They want to be able to offer good jobs with attractive salaries for all its adult citizens, as well as for the younger generation, so they are not forced to move out of the area for better economic prospects. The Otero County Economic Development Council is a major force in these activities.

The County is constrained somewhat by the small amount of private land available—about 11 percent of the area—as well as the lack of readily available potable water. Efforts to desalinate the water, if successful, could position the County as a leader in this area and potentially be turned to economic benefit. Completion of the Tularosa Basin National Desalination Facility creates the potential to develop a cluster of water desalination facilities and businesses.

Military operations also serve to constrain commercial growth by seeking to limit development around bases due to potential encroachment as well as road closures during missile launches. On the other hand, aviation expertise at Holloman, WSMR, the 46<sup>th</sup> Test Group and the coming X Prize Cup event offers the potential to grow an aerospace industry cluster.

The County does offer good high speed computer communication, an excellent climate, a well-educated workforce, excellent flying weather, plenty of sunshine, and an abundance of natural resources. The use of forest resources are currently constrained by the ability of existing sawmills to log in the Lincoln National Forest. Oil and natural gas has recently been discovered in southern Otero County. The Bureau of Land Management is currently attempting to establish the conditions for future oil and natural gas extraction from the area of Otero Mesa. Recent oil and gas exploration may provide for future economic development if environmental concerns can be overcome. Attendees of various public meetings also suggested developing value-added agriculture businesses such as beef-processing, nut processing and wine-making.

Otero County also is well positioned to capture businesses as they leave the more expensive areas on the West Coast, the Midwest and the East Coast. The adverse business climate and decreasing quality of life in these areas are making New Mexico and Otero County an increasingly viable option. It has a budding film industry with a film office that opened in 2003 and two film festivals, one in October and one in March. The County is trying to develop film crews, and NMSU at Alamogordo has started offering an associate degree in three-dimensional computer animation.

Tourism is also an important source of income (see list of attractions earlier in the chapter). Agri-tourism could be more fully developed as a way to supplement farm and ranching income. Across the border in Chavez County, for example, one of the working ranches is developing a small conference center and air strip so people can fly in for brief conferences. Pumpkin farms in Santa Fe and Torrance Counties sponsor hayrides and corn mazes for school children.

The County formerly participated in a State-funded Sunbird package to attract retirees to the area until funding ran out; this could be revived. The fine weather during Fall and Spring school breaks lends itself to family tourist packages. There have been suggestions to rebuild the Cloud-Climbing railway as a tourist attraction. The planned 68-mile Cloud-Climbing Rail Loop Trail could also bring in hikers and other tourists.

The primary obstacle to the recruitment of new jobs to Otero County is the lack of financial incentives. The competition from inside and outside the State is intense. Numerous municipalities in New Mexico have passed the Local Options Gross Receipts Tax (LOGRT) for economic development which has given them the ability to offer cash incentives to companies to offset their startup costs in a new location. Alamogordo and Clovis are two communities in New Mexico that have been very successful in using the LOGRT to create jobs. Despite the many advantages of moving to Otero County, the move of a company to a new location represents a significant risk which should be mitigated by incentives.

## **C. Desired Future Economic Conditions**

In the future, Otero County would like to achieve steady growth that makes full use of its Federal entities but continues to diversify with nongovernmental businesses and industries. It would continue a high level of education for its workforce and create or attract good jobs with attractive salaries to offer sufficient levels of employment to County residents of all ages and circumstances. Tourism would continue to play a major role in the economy, and film-making would become an established sector. Sustainable oil and gas extraction and logging would be reestablished as profitable industries.

## **D. Economic Development Goals**

### **ED Goal 1. Support existing businesses and encourage their expansion.**

Strategy a. Identify common needs and obstacles to business expansion.

Strategy b. Encourage residents, employers, and the government to buy locally.

- Actively participate in Alamogordo and Cloudcroft Chambers of Commerce “shop local” programs and marketing activities to include radio spots and print media advertising.

Strategy c. Identify workforce training deficiencies that prevent companies from expanding.

- Work with the Eastern Area Workforce Development Board to determine best practices and encourage their implementation in Otero County.
- Work with the Otero County One-Stop Center of the Workforce Development Board to implement workforce training that will help existing businesses.
- Encourage the Otero County One-Stop Center of the Workforce Development Board to provide outreach services to educate employers on the resources available for workforce development.

Strategy d. Work with the local Chambers of Commerce to identify State and Federal issues that hamper local businesses.

- Participate in chamber committees that work with State and Federal legislative and funding issues.
- Participate in chamber-led legislative forums, roundtables and town halls.

**ED Goal 2. Continue to diversify the economy by attracting or growing additional businesses and industries with attractive employment and wages.**

Strategy a. Support the Otero County Economic Development Council's (OCEDC) recruitment and retention efforts.

- Participate in local site visits of companies looking to relocate to Otero County.
- Provide input to OCEDC on the types of industries to attract.
- Be proactive about marketing.
- Develop incentives such as a revolving loan fund.

Strategy b. Use public funds to assist in the development of new jobs when feasible and within the provisions of the New Mexico Local Economic Act.

Strategy c. Identify County land that could be used as an incentive in attracting industry.

Strategy d. Facilitate development of beef processing, nut-processing, wine-making and other value-added enterprises.

**ED Goal 3. Support the development of industrial / business parks that will be attractive to new and expanding business.**

Strategy a. Identify County land that could be used as an industrial / business park.

Strategy b. Use County economic development funding to create small industrial/business parks in the County

**ED Goal 4. Promote tourism in the County**

Strategy a. Promote school break getaways: White Sands, Space Museum etc. and special events.

Strategy b. Develop community resources to support incentives for tourism.

Strategy c. Develop plans to attract tourism and trade from the air travel industry.

- Promote commercial growth in and around the airport for dining, lodging and travel centers.

Strategy d. Promote agri-tourism.

- Actively advertise nut and wine producers' efforts as well as other agricultural products as part of a program to promote Otero County as a tourism destination.
- Promote events such as the cherry festival in High Rolls.
- Support the efforts of agricultural producers to diversity and develop value added products that attract visitors to the County.
- Actively participate in local and state initiatives to promote agri-tourism, including Rural Economic Development through Tourism, OCEDC, and Southeast Economic Development.

**ED Goal 5. Support and promote the full use of Otero County's Federal facilities/entities; Holloman Air Force Base, White Sands Missile Range, the Lincoln National Forest, White Sands National Monument and the Sunspot and Apache Point observatories.**

Strategy a. Recognize these entities as having prime economic significance to the community and take action to facilitate their retention and expansion.

- Educate citizens to encourage their acceptance of the uses of these facilities

- Encourage appropriate development surrounding military bases as described in Holloman AFB's AICUZ study through cooperation between agencies and private landowners.
  - Support and actively encourage efforts of our Congressional delegation and local community-based organizations to expand the missions/economic impact of Holloman Air Force Base, White Sands Missile Range and the Sunspot and Apache Point Observatories as well as White Sands National Monument and the Lincoln National Forrest
- Strategy b. Cooperate with El Paso and Las Cruces in the promotion of the region as a location capable of handling new military and homeland defense missions.
- Strategy c. Encourage use of available local workforce and local business products and services at these facilities.
- Strategy d. Re-use former government facilities.

## E. Implementation of Economic Development Goals

There are a number of resources available for economic development, most of which are well known to the Otero County Economic Development Council and the local chambers of commerce. The County is working on becoming a certified community, which would give it access to marketing and advertising funds from the State of New Mexico. Implementation actions, timing, responsibilities, and potential funding sources to meet the County's economic development goals are listed in Table 8-3.

**Table 8-3. Implementation of Economic Development Goals**

<b>Implementation Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
Support and expansion of existing businesses	Otero County Economic Development Council, business leaders, and Alamogordo and Cloudcroft Chambers of Commerce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify common needs and obstacles to expansion.</li> <li>▪ Encourage residents, employers, government to buy locally.</li> </ul>	Alamogordo and Cloudcroft Chambers of Commerce
Workforce training deficiencies	Otero County Economic Development Council, businesses, and Alamogordo and Cloudcroft Chambers of Commerce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify workforce training deficiencies that prevent companies from expanding and implement training.</li> <li>▪ Work with various agencies/organizations to implement workforce training to help existing business.</li> <li>▪ Educate employers on resources available for workforce development.</li> </ul>	Eastern Area Workforce Development Board, Otero County One-Stop Center of Workforce Development Board.

Table 8-3 Continued

Implementation Action	Responsible Agency/Organization	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
State and federal issues that hamper local business	Otero County Economic Development Council, County Commission, and Alamogordo and Cloudcroft Chambers of Commerce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in local Chambers of Commerce committees that work with state and federal legislative and funding issues.</li> <li>Participate in Chamber-led legislative forums, roundtables and town halls.</li> </ul>	Otero County Economic Development Council,
Recruitment and retention efforts	County Commission, Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in local site visits of companies looking to relocate to Otero County.</li> <li>Provide input to OCEDC on types of industries to attract.</li> <li>Be pro-active about marketing.</li> <li>Develop incentives such as a revolving loan fund.</li> </ul>	County General Fund, Certified Communities Initiative, Lodgers Tax, Cooperative Advertising Program (NM Department of Tourism)
Development of new jobs	County Commission, Otero County Economic Development Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use public funds to assist in development of new jobs when feasible and within the provisions of the NM Local Economic Development Act.</li> <li>Proactively use the County's authority to use up to five percent of its General Fund to recruit new industry.</li> </ul>	County General Fund
Land use	County Commission, Otero County Economic Development Council, Southeast Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify County land that could be used as an incentive in attracting industry.</li> <li>Promote development of beef processing, nut processing, wine-making, and other value-added enterprises.</li> </ul>	Otero County Economic Development Council., Southeast Economic Development
Support development of industrial/business parks	County Commission, Otero County Economic Development Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify County land that could be used as an industrial park.</li> </ul>	County economic development funding; Rural Housing and Economic Development Program and the Section 108 loan guarantee and Economic Development Initiative Grant, (both US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development)



Table 8-3 Continued

Implementation Action	Responsible Agency/Organization	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
Tourism	Otero County Economic Development Council, local Chambers of Commerce, local Lodgers Tax Boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote tourism in the County such as school break getaways, White Sands National Monument, Space Museum etc.</li> <li>Develop community resources to support incentives for tourism.</li> <li>Develop plans to attract tourism and trade from the air travel industry, such as promoting commercial growth in and around the airport for dining, lodging, and travel centers.</li> <li>Promote agri-tourism.</li> </ul>	County General Fund, Certified Communities Initiative, Lodgers Tax, Cooperative Advertising Program (NM Department of Tourism)
Full use of Federal facilities	County Commission, Otero County Economic Development Council, local media, Cloudcroft and Alamogordo Chambers of Commerce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and actively encourage efforts of the Congressional delegation and local community-based organizations to recognize the economic impact and support the missions of these Federal facilities.</li> <li>Encourage use of the available local workforce and local business products and services at these facilities.</li> <li>Re-use former government facilities.</li> </ul>	Community Development Revolving Loan Fund, (NM Economic Development Department), CDBG grant
Encroachment on Holloman and White Sands Range	County Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage cooperation between private landowners and military base officials to prevent incompatible land uses around Holloman AFB and White Sands Missile Range.</li> </ul>	County Commission, HAFB
Regional promotion	County Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperate with El Paso and Las Cruces in the promotion of the region as a location capable of handling new military and homeland defense missions.</li> </ul>	Local chambers of commerce and businesses

## 9. Community Facilities and Services

A County's community facilities make an important contribution to the overall quality of life. They provide places for recreation and relaxation, learning, cultural activities, and gathering with family and friends. The Community Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan examines the existing inventory of community facilities in Otero County and recommends additional facilities.

### A. Existing Community Facilities and Services Conditions

#### 1. Community Facilities

- *Alamogordo Civic Center* – The mission of the Alamogordo Civic Center is to provide facilities and services for meetings, seminars, conventions, trade expositions, concerts, and social, educational, or entertainment events at reasonable rates for all citizens and visitors. The Sgt. Willie Estrada Memorial Civic Center contains a 6,084-square-foot auditorium, four conference rooms varying in size from 450 to 828 square feet, a 345-square-foot kitchen, and restrooms. The kitchen contains a worktable, double convection oven, four-compartment mobile food warmer, refrigerator, freezer, stove, and sinks.
- *Alamogordo Senior Center* – The Alamogordo Senior Center provides a variety of services for persons of ages 60 and over. The center's mission is to create a social environment that provides support, education, recreation, nutrition, and entertainment for seniors in Alamogordo and the surrounding area. The senior center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Arrangements can also be made to open the center on weekends or evenings. The center offers a variety of programs for seniors including congregate lunch meals Monday through Friday that provide a third of the required daily allowance, Meals on Wheels for homebound seniors, homemaker services also for the homebound, and transportation services to the senior center and for various shopping, appointments, and outings. Recreation activities occur daily and include arts and crafts, ceramics, lapidary, dances, billiards, art, chorus, cards, and reading materials. Other services include educational programs like Spanish classes, beginning band, and insurance programs as well as health activities.
- *Sacramento Mountains Senior Services, Inc.* – The Sacramento Mountains Senior Services operates and maintains senior centers in Cloudcroft and High Rolls. They provide a variety of services including home-delivered meals, respite care, and housekeeping services. In addition to the above services many programs are also available to seniors. The Cloudcroft Senior Center offers health insurance benefits assistance counselors, regularly scheduled recreation programs like cards, dances, games, and parties; occasional recreational trips; and health and nutrition programs. A treadmill and stationary bike is available for use at the Cloudcroft Center as well as a fax and computers. Additionally, a lending library is available at both the Cloudcroft and High Rolls Centers. The Cloudcroft Senior Center is located at 212 Glorieta Avenue in Cloudcroft and the High Rolls Senior Center is at 96 Cottage Row in High Rolls.

- *Flickinger Center for the Performing Arts* – This 675-seat theatre for the performing arts is owned by the County and operated by a non-profit community group. The group also contributes to scholarships for young local talent. The Flickinger Center is located at 1110 New York Ave. in Alamogordo.

## 2. Health Care/Medical Facilities

- *Gerald Champion Regional Medical Center (GCRMC)* – Located in Alamogordo, the Gerald Champion Regional Medical Center is a state-of-the-art 95-bed medical center built in 1999. GCRMC is the first medical center in the country that is a shared civilian/military facility. The \$35 million facility is a one-story, 131,000 square foot medical care center focused on outpatient service. The emergency room includes 15 beds plus four trauma beds. Other facilities available at the hospital include general surgery, labor/delivery, nursery, helicopter pad, food court, and outdoor patio. There are 65 independent physicians that have privileges at GCRMC.
- *Tularosa Health Center* – Operated by Presbyterian Medical Services, the Tularosa Health Center offers the following services and programs: Medical Care, Pharmacy, Dental Care, Laboratory and Radiology, Patient Education, Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Public Health Nursing, Optometry, and Coordination of Community Services.
- *Sacramento Mountains Medical Center* – Located in Cloudcroft, the Sacramento Mountain Medical Center is operated by Presbyterian Medical Services and offers the following services and programs: Medical Care, Pharmacy, Dental Care, Laboratory and Radiology, Patient Education, Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Public Health Nursing, Optometry, and Coordination of Community Services.

Within the County, there are nine licensed dentists. All have offices in Alamogordo.

There are four nursing care facilities in the County.

- The Aristocrat Assisted Living Center: 89 beds includes Alzheimer's care
- Betty Dare Good Samaritan Center: 90 beds
- Casa Arena Blanca: 117 beds, includes Alzheimer's care
- La Francoise: 8 beds includes Alzheimer's care

## 3. Educational Facilities

Otero County is served primarily by three different school districts: Alamogordo Municipal School District, Cloudcroft Municipal School District, and Tularosa Municipal School District. County taxes help support these districts as well as the Gadsden School District, which covers a small portion of the southwest part of the County, and New Mexico State University.

- *Alamogordo Municipal School District* – The Alamogordo Municipal School District encompasses over 3,772 square miles and consists of two high schools, three middle schools, nine elementary schools, one intermediate school, and one primary school. For the 2003-2004 school year, the Alamogordo District school enrollment totaled 6,933 students. There were 122 students in pre-kindergarten, 517 students in kindergarten, 2,544 in elementary school (grades 1-5) , 1,651 students in middle school (grades 6-8) , and 2,099 in high school (grades 9-12).
- *Cloudcroft Municipal School District* – The Cloudcroft Municipal School District comprises one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school with a 2003-2004 school enrollment of 436 students. The district included 115 elementary students, 120 middle school students, and 180 high school students. The Cloudcroft School District covers more than 1,456 square miles.
- *Tularosa Municipal School District* – The Tularosa Municipal School District has approximately 1,019 students based on 2003-2004 school year enrollment counts and covers over 1,395 square miles. The district consists of three schools including one high school, one middle school, and one elementary school. Of the 1,019 students, 367 were elementary students, 262 were middle school students, and 310 were high school students.
- *German School of Alamogordo* – The German School of Alamogordo was organized to provide an education to the children of German Air Force pilots training at Holloman Air Force Base.
- *New Mexico School for the Visually Handicapped* – The New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired opened its doors in 1903 to provide the training, support, and resources necessary to prepare blind, visually impaired, and multiply impaired children in New Mexico to fully participate in work, families, and life. Their goals are to provide academic and compensatory skills training, support and ancillary services and resources to each student, promote advocacy and outreach, and to provide a safe, productive, and nurturing environment for students. It is owned and operated by the State of New Mexico.
- *Higher Education* – Opportunities for higher education can be found locally at the Alamogordo Campus of New Mexico State University. NMSU at Alamogordo offers students Bachelor's Degrees as well as Associate Degrees in a variety of programs. It also offers distance education, community education classes, and sponsors a small business development center in Alamogordo that organizes small business workshops. The spring 2002 enrollment at NMSU, Alamogordo, was 1,751 students. Additionally, the main New Mexico State University campus is located in Las Cruces, only 68 miles from Alamogordo. Educational opportunities are also available at Holloman Air Force Base.

#### 4. Library Services

The public libraries are located Alamogordo and Cloudcroft, but the County contributes funds to the State Bookmobile which serves the rural areas in the southwest geographic region.

- *Alamogordo Public Library* – The library staff comprises five librarians and nine staff members. The library had a total budget of \$668,848 for the 2001-2002 year with total expenditures of \$644,094. There are approximately 90,180 book volumes, 1,348 audio volumes, 2,684 video resources, and 301 subscriptions available to the public. Twenty-three computer work stations are accessible with twelve stations providing internet access. Approximately 254,478 library visits were made during 2001-2002. It is open all days of the week and includes evening hours.
- *Cloudcroft Public Library* – Known as the Michael Nivison Library, this library consists of one part-time librarian and one part-time staff member. The 2002 total income was \$35,500 with total expenditures of \$22,000. The library contains approximately 9,500 book volumes, 250 audio volumes, and 50 video resources. There are four computer work stations and all provide internet access. About 260 library visits and 780 internet user visits were made during 2001- 2002. The library is open Monday through Saturday at varying times mostly during the day.
- *Tularosa Public Library* – Tularosa has recently started a public library.
- *New Mexico State University-Alamogordo Campus* – The NMSU Alamogordo campus library, officially named the David H. Townsend Library, is open to the public and supported by seven full-time employees. The library contains more than 51,000 book volumes, more than 400 magazine and journal subscriptions, nearly 2,000 New Mexico State documents, and several thousand audiovisual tapes. The library is open Sunday through Friday with special hours during University holidays and breaks.
- *Holloman Air Force Base* – The HAFB Library is available to qualified military users.
- *Bookmobile* – The New Mexico State Library operates bookmobiles in four geographic regions of the state, providing books and information to rural citizens who have no local library service. Each bookmobile carries up to 4,000 volumes and makes a monthly route of regularly scheduled stops in the rural communities within its region. The Bookmobile Southwest region covers Otero County, stopping at La Luz Senior Citizens Center, the Tularosa old Post Office, High Rolls Grocery, Cloudcroft Electric Co-op Warehouse, the Mayhill and Weed Post Offices, Pinion Store, and Orogrande Post Office.

## 5. Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreation facilities in the area are primarily owned and operated by the City of Alamogordo or private organizations, such as the golf courses listed in the tourism section. The County is responsible for the County Fairgrounds and a public rifle range.

- *City of Alamogordo* – The City of Alamogordo Parks Division maintains in excess of 300 acres of parks and sports-related areas in order to provide an improved quality of life to the citizens of Alamogordo. In addition to the Parks Department, the Alamogordo Recreation Department offers a wide

range of fitness, sports activities, programs, and special events which augment a schedule of year-round leisure services and recreation for the community. The department operates and maintains 43 facilities and fields.

- *Family Recreation Center* – Located in Alamogordo, the Family Recreation Center provides residents and visitors with a variety of activities for fitness and fun. The facility contains a 50 meter x 25-yard pool that is open year-round; a 7,000-square-foot gymnasium for basketball and volleyball; a multi-purpose room designed for yoga, dance and fitness classes as well as for meetings or parties; a youth activities area with big screen TV; pool table, air hockey table, and ping pong table; a weight room with free weights, fitness machines, and heavy bags; and a child care facility available at no charge to members. The Family Recreation Center also provides a variety of services and programs to residents, including birthday party packages, special day parties, an “After School Frenzy” program, day camp programs, youth leagues, and special events such as craft shows and holiday festivals.
- *Otero County Fairgrounds* – The 37-acre County Fairgrounds hosts a number of events throughout the year, including the County Fair, horse shows, dances, animal clinics, and a Rattlesnake Round-up. It is also home to the Otero County /New Mexico State University Extension Service and master gardener association. It is owned primarily by the County, except for a City-owned portion of the parking lot.
- *Otero County Rifle Range* – The County sponsors a supervised shooting range for rifles, pistols, shotguns, and archery. Ranges available include 360-yard and 200-yard rifle ranges, a 50-yard pistol range, a 60-yard archery range, and four 45-yard general purpose ranges. The range is home to the Otero Practical Shooting Association which stages weekend competitions. The range offers basic education classes in handling these weapons as well as in home protection and hunter education. Qualifying classes are also held for the State, County and local departments of public safety and for the US Border Control.

## **B. Community Facilities and Services Issues**

County residents rely primarily on services in the County's municipalities—mainly Alamogordo—but several Steering Committee members thought the County should provide more outreach services to residents in rural areas as transportation to Alamogordo is limited. Another issue is that more retirees from the military are staying in Otero County, generating a need for more medical services for this population, which typically is covered by the US Government.

## **C. Desired Future Community Facilities and Services**

The County would like to have a community presence through a community center or other facility in every community that has a population of more than 500 people or so. Mindful of the scarcity of funds, Steering Committee members thought the best way to accomplish this was through joint use of the existing fire

stations, which typically offer an adjoining meeting room. Dual use of such public facilities could become established County policy, and such adjoining gathering spaces could be expanded in the design and construction of new fire stations.

The County would also like to ensure that medical services are available either within walking distance or a short car ride to residents in rural areas so they could seek services earlier and avoid having to take the ambulance to the emergency room. As medical facilities require a certain service area population, the County might look at population clusters in addition to those in the incorporated municipalities and explore various options such as additional transportation services, visiting health professionals, or more clinics. Medical services for military retirees are primarily the function of the Federal government, but the County could supplement these services by recognizing qualified providers and helping cover the cost of services to indigent recipients.

Participants in an earlier comprehensive planning process also envisioned the County's providing more recreational opportunities for its residents, such as trails, parks, a year-round swimming pool and an amphitheatre. They sought the County's continued support of education and desired to establish a County-wide library system. They also sought to expand the County's visual and performing arts programs. The County might look to expanding the Bookmobile service, supporting online library services, or establishing another community library, perhaps in conjunction with the school districts. Free assistance in planning a trails system and building volunteer capacity to serve as stewards is available through the National Park Service's Rivers and Trails Program, while construction funds for trails, parks, and other facilities can be sought through the State Legislature and the NM Department of Transportation.

## **D. Community Facilities and Services Goals**

### **CSF Goal 1. Work toward making medical services more available to residents in rural areas of the County.**

- Strategy a. Meet with local and regional healthcare providers to discuss options for providing more medical services in rural areas, such as a traveling nurse practitioner and internet satellite links to larger medical facilities, or better transportation options to existing facilities.
- Strategy b. Identify and pursue funding sources for rural primary medical care, such as the National Health Service Corps and Rural Primary Health Program through NM Department of Health.

### **CFS Goal 2. Provide for various recreational activities of County residents.**

- Strategy a. Inventory opportunities for the following recreational facilities (indoor and outdoor) throughout the County, including joint use with municipalities or with private entities (motels, golf courses) and evaluate the need and priority for the following:
  - Recreation and hiking trails
  - Year-round swimming pools
  - Amphitheatre



- Open Space
- Multiple-Use parks

Strategy b. Develop a County recreation master plan, with County citizen input, to coordinate joint use of existing facilities, locate and plan new facilities, and develop access to public land for recreation.

Strategy c. Hire a recreation planner.

**CFS Goal 3. Continue to strongly support quality education and increase the level of academic achievement in all schools.**

Strategy a. Use County resources to enhance education.

- Provide on-job training.
- Integrate educational activities into County facilities, such as the fairgrounds, fire departments, parks, hospital, courthouse, former ACES (Alamogordo Center for Exceptional Students) building, and other County facilities.

**CFS Goal 4. Implement a successful visual and performing arts program throughout the County.**

Strategy a. Encourage formation of a non-profit organization to maintain and expand current arts activities.

- Create folk art/folk life festivals.
  - Contact FolkMADS, Southwest Pickers in Albuquerque
  - Centennial Festival—May 1999
- Get involved with New Mexico Arts resources.
- Utilize marketing.
- Involve media in stimulating public interest.
- Inventory sites available for performances or gatherings.

Strategy b. Encourage early involvement of art in new construction and renovation processes

- Devote a small percentage of County construction funds derived from general obligation bonds or certain revenue bonds to purchase or commission public works of art.

**CFS Goal 5. Establish a County-wide library system.**

Strategy a. Evaluate ways to expand library services throughout the County.

- Explore expanding State Bookmobile services.
- Consider establishing branch libraries in existing facilities connected with the main library through the Internet and inventory potential sites.
- Utilize State library funding and apply for grants.

## E. Implementation of Community Facilities and Services Goals

The implementation strategy for community facilities and services goals takes advantage of existing facilities and joint use opportunities, while directing County resources toward filling in the gaps in an economical way. The implementation action, responsible party, tasks and potential funding sources are set out in Table 9-1.

**Table 9-1. Implementation of Community Facilities and Services Goals**

<b>Implementation Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
Dual fire station use	County Commission, County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish policy that community meeting space be incorporated into new fire station designs.</li> </ul>	Legislative appropriations, County General Fund
Rural Medical Services	County Commission, County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with local and regional healthcare providers to discuss options for providing medical services in rural areas.</li> </ul>	County General Fund
Funding Rural Medical Services	County Commission, County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and pursue funding sources for rural primary medical care.</li> </ul>	Rural Primary Health Program (NM Department of Health), National Health Service Corps (US Dept. of Health and Human Services)
Recreational facilities	County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construct trails, year-round pool, amphitheatre, parks</li> </ul>	Legislative appropriations, park impact fee, Transportation Enhancement Activities (NM Department of Transportation)
Recreation Master Plan	County Commission, County staff, consultants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop County recreation master plan and priority list.</li> </ul>	Legislative appropriations, County General Fund
Open Space	County Commission, County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and set aside or purchase open space.</li> </ul>	Legislative or County appropriation, cluster housing, transfer of development rights

**Table 9-1 Continued**

<b>Implementation Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
Recreation planner	County Commission, County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a recreation planner position and hire a planner who can solicit grants.</li> </ul>	County general fund, grant
Arts Program	County Commission, local artists and musicians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage formation of a non-profit arts organization to expand arts activities.</li> <li>▪ Inventory sites available for performances.</li> </ul>	National Endowment for the Arts, other grants
Art in new construction	County Commission, voters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Devote percentage of construction bonds to purchase/commission public art works.</li> </ul>	Bond issues
Library Services expansion	County Commission, State Bookmobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore ways to expand State Bookmobile service.</li> <li>▪ Establish branch libraries through the internet.</li> </ul>	State, County general fund



## 10. Water Supply

### A. Existing Water Supply Conditions

Water supply for the residents of Otero County comes from various sources and is not directly part of the County's activities. Domestic water is provided by each individual municipality or community within the County. Although Otero County is not directly responsible for domestic water transmission or distribution, it is concerned with future sustainability of water and other natural resources. Currently the County supports the efforts of the Office of the State Engineer (OSE) and utilizes its guidelines in making decisions on water use within the County. The County is concerned, however, that the OSE's depletion rate of 2.5 acre feet per year will deplete much of the water supply in the current generation. The County will continue to work with State authorities to better understand the aquifer and to manage it for sustainability. Water issues for Otero County are addressed in the *Regional Water Plan 2000 – 2040, Tularosa Basin and Salt Basin* documents. This plan is available through the Office of the State Engineer or online at [www.ose.nm.us/water-info](http://www.ose.nm.us/water-info).

The County does have a water conservation ordinance in effect to encourage all users of water within Otero County to reduce water consumption and waste. This also is the purview of the State Engineer, who requires a 40-year water management plan from municipal water utilities and enforces water conservation measures. The County continually seeks new technologies in water conservation and will amend future conservation plans and specific plan according to technological advances.

### B. Water Supply Issues

The summary of the *Tularosa Basin/Great Salt Basin* expresses concern about a shortfall in sustainable water supply for most of the communities in the County by the year 2040. This is largely due to projected population growth over the next 40 years. The ultimate remedy to the potential shortage is a long-term plan and action. The current short-term crisis will remain for the near future during the drought situation. In order to prepare for the anticipated water shortfall, various alternative methods of water recovery and storage, as well as watershed restoration, will need to be a priority for Otero County. The County should continue to take a proactive role in the many water issues facing the area in order to ensure a sustainable water supply for the future.

Other water issues facing the County are the location of abundant and quality water. Much of the potable water within the County is in the southern region where it is less populated. In the densely populated northern areas, potable water supply is significantly less. The Otero County Soil and Water Conservation District received a State Legislative Grant to hire the NM Bureau of Geology to begin hydrogeologic mapping in the Sacramento Mountains. Phase I will encompass mapping from Timberon north to La Luz Canyon and extend on the west side to Alamogordo. Several more phases will be needed to complete the mapping.

## C. Desired Future Water Supply Conditions

Otero County seeks to ensure a sufficient water supply to meet the future water needs of its residents. To accomplish this, local municipalities, outlying communities and the County should work together to plan a potable water system for the region. The County should participate in regional water systems and task forces and mediate water disputes. The County also wants to reduce the depletion rate to one acre-foot per year, rather than 2.5 acre-feet per year. Other areas of involvement would include developing a watershed management plan, desalinating the abundant Tularosa Basin Aquifer, establishing leak-proof and long-term storage catchments at the base of canyons with perennial streams and flood flows, and reclaiming water. The County anticipates expanding its planning horizon from the current 40 years to 60 years. These are just a few of the alternatives that the County will explore to secure a sustainable potable water supply for its residents.

The County Commissioners support, believe in and are sworn to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of New Mexico.

## D. Water Supply Goals

### **WG 1. Optimize the function of the existing watershed and water sources.**

- Strategy a. Promote recharge of the fresh water aquifer at higher elevations.
- Strategy b. Initiate and develop a County Watershed Management Plan.
- Strategy c. Improve agricultural irrigation water efficiency.
- Strategy d. Utilize storm water drainage for the maximum beneficial use by citizens.
- Strategy e. Work with the US Forest Service and other Federal land managers in a collaborative effort to restore surface water flow and groundwater recharge in watersheds to historical conditions and to make historic water yield a consideration in USFS planning documents.
- Strategy f. Work with other state, local and federal agencies to balance withdrawals from the aquifer with the recharge in that respective watershed or area.
- Strategy g. Work with the Mescalero Apache Tribe, through their sawmills, and the USDA Forest Service to restore healthy forest conditions in the Sacramento Mountains.

### **WG 2. Develop new sources of water.**

- Strategy a. Continue to support and collaborate with the desalination projects.
- Strategy b. Explore Aquifer Storage and Recovery Plans.
- Strategy c. Explore the feasibility of distributing water from aquifers in the south to the populated areas in the north.
- Strategy d. Support development of new water well fields in the alluvial fans.

- Strategy e. Construct long-term storage catchments at the bases of canyons and streams.
- Strategy f. Study and support efforts to blend quality water with water containing a high content of high total dissolved solids.

**WG 3. Be pro-active in addressing water issues to insure long-term sustainability for future generations.**

- Strategy a. Create a basis of cooperation and communication with other counties that share some of the water sources of Otero County.
- Strategy b. Develop a regional water plan more specific to Otero County with a 60-year planning horizon.
- Strategy c. Initiate and develop a County water master plan.

**WG 4. Promote water conservation at all levels of the region.**

- Strategy a. Work with local citizen groups to promote awareness and use of water conservation techniques in the community.
- Strategy b. Require new construction to include appropriate water-conserving measures including low-flow fixtures, water-conserving appliances, and low-volume irrigation systems and to provide water conservation incentives.
- Strategy c. Explore aquifer management to ensure sustainable water without depleting the aquifer more than one acre-foot per year.
- Strategy d. Develop a program to encourage existing consumers to retrofit with appropriate water-conserving appliances and low-volume irrigation systems.
- Strategy e. Implement various plans available to the County, such as the subdivision ordinance, Public Land Use Advisory Committee (PLUAC) document, or County ordinance for additional control of current water supplies.

**WG 5. Obtain a better understanding of the hydrogeology of Otero County.**

- Strategy a. Work with Federal agencies to collect any existing water-related data.
- Strategy b. Develop all required data obtained through hydrological studies and apply resulting data for the beneficial use of the citizens.

## **E. Implementation of Water Supply Goals**

A variety of federal and state agencies and non-profits have resources available for addressing water supply needs of the County. On the Federal level, the Army Corps of Engineers is a potential funding source for maximizing the beneficial use of storm water and recharging the fresh water aquifer. The US Department of Agriculture is a resource for improving the efficiency of irrigated agriculture and exploring aquifer storage and recovery. Watershed and water source protection, transporting water from aquifers, and reuse of graywater fall under the purview of the New Mexico Environment Department. Regional water plans are funded



through the NM Interstate Stream Commission. Implementation actions, timing, responsibilities, and potential funding sources to meet the County's water supply goals are listed in Table 10-1.

**Table 10-1. Implementation of Water Supply Goals**

<b>Implementation Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
Watershed and water source protection	Federal land managers, Mescalero Apache Tribe, private landowners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a County Watershed Management Plan.</li> <li>▪ Work with the USDA Forest Service and other Federal land managers to restore surface water flow and groundwater recharge in watersheds to historical conditions and to make historic water yield a consideration in USFS planning documents.</li> <li>▪ Work with other government agencies to balance withdrawals for the aquifer with recharge.</li> <li>▪ Work with the Mescalero Apache Tribe and the USFS to restore healthy forest conditions in the Sacramento Mountains.</li> </ul>	New Mexico Environment Department Murray Morgan Building Rm. 106 411 Tenth Street 437-7115
Improve irrigated agricultural water efficiency	County Agricultural Extension Service, Soil and Water Conservation District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote drip irrigation where feasible</li> <li>▪ Monitor soil moisture</li> <li>▪ Identify commercially feasible low water-use crops</li> </ul>	United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Maximize beneficial use of storm water	County Commission and Corp of Engineers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop catchments for storm water runoff.</li> </ul>	Army Corps of Engineers
Promote recharge of fresh water aquifer at elevation	County Commission, Corp of Engineers, Office of the State Engineer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Locate and identify fresh water streams from mountain runoff that can be utilized for aquifer recharge.</li> </ul>	Army Corp of Engineers
Reclamation and use of saline water	County Commission, Soil and Water Conservation District, US Bureau of Reclamation & Office of the State Engineer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support ongoing research to improve technology</li> <li>▪ Support pilot desalination projects</li> </ul>	State of New Mexico Water Financing, Environmental Protection Agency Special Needs Programs

Table 10-1 Continued

Implementation Action	Responsible Agency/Organization	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
Explore aquifer storage and recovery	Municipalities, County Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support ongoing research to improve technology.</li> <li>Consider storage projects in very wet years to reduce long-term evaporative losses.</li> </ul>	USDA Rural Utilities Services
Explore transporting water from southern aquifers to the northern population	County Commission, County Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feasibility study and cost-effectiveness of a pipeline from Southern Otero County to the northern region.</li> </ul>	NM Environment Department, Community Development Block Grant, USDA Rural Utilities Services
Support development of new water well fields in alluvial fans	County Commission, Municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a water well field study.</li> </ul>	New Mexico Environment Department
Long-term sustainability	County Commission, Municipalities, State of New Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperate with other counties that share water resources</li> <li>Develop regional water plan more specific to Otero County with a 60-year planning horizon.</li> <li>Develop County water master plan</li> </ul>	Interstate Stream Commission
Require water conserving measures in new construction	County Commission, County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop voluntary guidelines and recommendations for water conservation measures, such as types and models of fixtures, appliances, and irrigation systems in a brochure to distribute to local builders.</li> <li>Prepare and adopt a water conservation ordinance that specifies water conservation measures to be included in all new construction</li> <li>Work with local municipalities and community water systems to create incentives, such as rebates on billing, to encourage water conservation in new construction.</li> </ul>	County General Fund

Table 10-1 Continued

Implementation Action	Responsible Agency/Organization	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
Encourage water conserving measures in existing buildings	County Commission, County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop voluntary guidelines and recommendations for retrofitting existing fixtures, such as types and models of fixtures, appliances, and irrigation systems in a brochure to distribute to local building owners and homeowners.</li> <li>▪ Work with local municipalities and community water systems to create incentives, such as rebates on billing, to encourage utility customers to replace existing fixtures.</li> </ul>	County General Fund
Aquifer management	County Commission, Regional Water Plan Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explore aquifer management to ensure sustainable water without depleting the aquifer more than one acre-foot per year.</li> </ul>	NM State Engineer, Interstate Stream Commission
Implement existing plans	County Commission, Public Land Use Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement existing plans.</li> </ul>	County General fund
Hydrogeology data	County Staff, Office of the State Engineer, Federal Emergency Management Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collect data concerning the historical hydrogeology of the area.</li> </ul>	County General Fund, State Legislative Grant

## II. Storm Water Drainage

### A. Existing Storm Water Drainage Conditions

Otero County utilizes historic arroyos for storm drainage. Otero County maintains drainage on County roads and bar ditches. The County also works with Federal Agencies after fire disasters to address the enhanced flooding potential created by the effects of fire damage.

### B. Storm Water Drainage Issues

Currently, various areas around the County experience flooding due to over-reliance on natural storm drain structures and paths. Otero County is subject to flooding in various areas throughout the County due to the lack of a comprehensive plan that addresses watershed issues.

### C. Desired Future Storm Water Conditions

The County desires to provide a safe and high quality of life for County residents through well-maintained and adequate stormwater drainage structures and control methods. Methods to prevent flooding could serve a dual purpose of recharging the aquifer and supplementing the water supply.

### D. Storm Water Drainage Goals

**SD 1. Provide a safe and high quality of life for County residents through well-maintained and adequate storm water drainage structures.**

- Strategy a. Attempt to secure funding by appropriate means to study the drainage basins, patterns and anticipated flows of the area so that drainage infrastructure can be designed to adequately carry the flows under roadways and away from properties and roads.
- Strategy b. Work with municipalities and private and public properties that utilize flood control systems to varying degrees to incorporate these systems into components of future flood control projects.
- Strategy c. Utilize existing County documents that may more specifically address storm water drainage issues.

- Strategy d. Attempt to get voter approval to begin the process of implementing a more adequate drainage system than naturally occurring arroyos to improve public safety.
- Strategy e. Review and revise the Otero County Subdivision Ordinance to address drainage concerns.

## E. Implementation of Storm Water Drainage Goals

The County will continue to work with FEMA guidelines as applicable and continually update mapping through the County GIS department to reflect and provide true and realistic flood and watershed information. Table 11-1 lists implementation actions, timing, responsibilities, and potential funding sources to meet the County's storm water goals.

**Table 11-1. Implementation of Storm Water Drainage Goals**

Implementation Action	Responsible Agency/Organization	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
Design Guide	County Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a design guide as a supplement to the subdivision ordinance that establishes drainage criteria and design standards to be incorporated into new development.</li> </ul>	Community Development Block Grant, County General Fund
Updated FEMA maps	County GIS staff, FEMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update current FEMA maps and establish a process for County involvement in ongoing updates.</li> </ul>	County General Fund
Roadway improvements	County Commission, County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-surface and re-pave as many roads as possible to direct storm runoff to properly designed drainage infrastructure.</li> </ul>	Co-op paving funds through New Mexico Department of Transportation, Community Development Block Grant, NM Department of Finance
Drainage Systems	County Commission, County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek voter approval to construct drainage alternatives to arroyos.</li> <li>Revise County subdivision ordinance to address drainage concerns.</li> </ul>	General Fund

## 12. Wastewater

### A. Existing Wastewater Conditions

Otero County does not provide wastewater collection or treatment for County residents. The local incorporated communities are responsible for wastewater collection and treatment facilities. The rural areas outside municipal entities typically utilize septic systems for wastewater disposal.

### B. Wastewater Issues

Otero County recognizes septic systems are a potential source of groundwater pollution. The County will work with New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) to mitigate any existing problems and embrace new technology as it is developed and available.

### C. Desired Future Wastewater Conditions

Due to stricter EPA requirements, health issues, and continued growth in the rural areas, wastewater treatment and collection may be needed in the future. Wastewater treatment can also be linked to meeting the County's future water supply needs through water reclamation and reuse.

The community of Chaparral in the southern region of the County is currently planning a centralized wastewater collection and treatment system that would be owned and operated by Dona Ana County. The facility plan for this system includes the extension of sewer service into the Otero County side of the Chaparral community. Otero County has participated in the discussions regarding this project through a joint ventures agreement with Dona Ana County. No definite plans involving Otero County have been made to date; however, increased involvement in these types of wastewater projects is desired for the future.

### D. Wastewater Goals

Recent information has proven that inadequate wastewater systems are a major contributor to shallow groundwater aquifer pollution. New technology exists to mitigate this circumstance. The County encourages, as science and technology develops, the promotion of prudent wastewater management systems that would include reuse to mitigate potential pollution.

#### **WWG 1. Encourage the use of wastewater systems that protect the environment, re-use water and protect groundwater quality.**

Strategy a. Encourage reclamation and reuse of grey water.

Strategy b. Support the continued use of permitted septic tank/leach field systems where appropriate.

- Strategy c. Promote the development or extension of centralized wastewater service to areas of growth where population density is high.
- Strategy d. Encourage or require the use of self-contained septic systems within the County jurisdiction.
- Strategy e. Be a leader in wastewater issues through promotion, regulation and public awareness of environmentally friendly wastewater systems.

## E. Implementation of Wastewater Goals

The NM Environment Department is the main resource for information about and prevention of groundwater contamination. Table 12-1 lists actions, timing, responsibilities and potential funding sources for implementing the County's wastewater goals.

**Table 12-1. Implementation of Wastewater Goals**

<b>Implementation Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
Re-use of gray water	Municipalities, County Commission, New Mexico Environment Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain and distribute information about state law allowing re-use of gray water and suggested uses.</li> <li>Re-use wastewater for landscape watering where feasible.</li> </ul>	New Mexico Environment Department
Coordination with New Mexico Environment Department	County Commission, County staff, NMED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate with the NMED to mitigate existing problems related to groundwater pollution resulting from faulty or inadequate wastewater collection and treatment systems.</li> </ul>	N/A
Wastewater system awareness	County Commission, NMED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Obtain and distribute informational brochures that describe best practices in on-site wastewater treatment and how homeowners can recognize problems and upgrade their systems.</li> </ul>	NMED



## 13. Solid Waste Management

### A. Existing Solid Waste Management Conditions

Otero County provides solid waste disposal for residents through convenience centers located at 33 Gravel Pit Road in La Luz and another on La Velle Road in Alamogordo. Currently trash disposal is free except for tires, which cost one dollar each for disposal. Commercial solid waste disposal is available countywide via multiple providers. Otero County provides recycling services at the local convenience centers including not only the standard recycle items, but tire recycling as well.

### B. Solid Waste Management Issues

Currently Otero County solid waste infrastructure is operating at full capacity and any increase will require additional capital outlay.

### C. Desired Future Solid Waste Management Conditions

It would be desirable to expand the capacity of the solid waste infrastructure and recycling capacity to serve future residents.

### D. Solid Waste Management Goals

**SWG 1. Provide adequate solid waste collection capacity to meet the future needs of County residents.**

Strategy a. Expand solid waste disposal facilities.

### E. Implementation of Solid Waste Management Goals

The County's main solid waste goal is to increase the capacity of its solid waste infrastructure. The North American Development Bank is a potential funding source, as shown in Table 13-1.

**Table 13-1. Implementation of Solid Waste Management Goals**

Implementation Action	Responsible Agency/Organization	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
Solid waste infrastructure capacity	County Commission	▪ Anticipate capacity increases that may be required to serve increased population in the County.	North American Development Bank



## **14. Other Utilities Infrastructure**

### **A. Existing Utilities Conditions**

#### **1. Electricity**

Otero County residents are served by Texas New Mexico Power Company and Otero County Electric Cooperative for electric power. Texas New Mexico Power Company typically provides electric power for the higher populated areas, while Otero County Electric Cooperative focuses on the more rural outlying areas of the County. Private and local electric cooperatives also provide reliable electric energy for Otero County.

#### **2. Communications**

Telephone service is available through local providers AT & T, Qwest, Tularosa Basin Telephone Company and Penasco Valley Telecommunication Company. New fiber optic mainline cables run from Alamogordo to Albuquerque and El Paso. Internet service, including Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), can be accessed through a large variety of local providers such as NETMDC, Onramp, Inc., LGI Trailnet, NMSU-A, Wayfarer Data Services, Dell City and Zianet, and typical national providers such as AOL, CompuServe, Earthlink, and MSN to name just a few. High speed internet service is available to the area. Cellular phone services are also available throughout the region provided by national carriers.

#### **3. Gas**

PNM Electric & Gas Services provide natural gas transmission and distribution to a large portion of Otero County. Currently PNM has a service area covering all of Alamogordo and south to Ora Vista, Boles Acres and a portion of Dog Canyon. PNM also serves an area north of Alamogordo to La Luz, Alamarosa, and Tularosa. The Mountain communities rely on Liquid Propane (LP) gas for their energy needs. LP Gas is available by a variety of suppliers in the area.

### **B. Utilities Issues**

Residents at the public meeting voiced concerns about the proliferation of cell phone towers and called for policies to minimize their visual intrusiveness. This was the only issue regarding utilities that surfaced at the public or steering committee meetings.

### **C. Desired Future Utilities Conditions**

Private gas suppliers will continue to provide a reliable source of gas energy for Otero County. Private and local electric cooperatives will continue to provide reliable power for Otero County.

### **D. Utilities Goals**

A goal addressing the visual intrusion of cell towers can be found in the Natural Resources chapter.



# 15. Transportation

A well-designed and balanced transportation system is crucial for the orderly functioning and development of local communities. The Transportation element of the comprehensive plan addresses the County's roads, pathways, and other means for people to get around in the community. The purpose of this transportation element is to address changes in the community environment that impact the transportation system. This system includes thoroughfares for motorized vehicles and air, bicycle, and pedestrian systems allowing commercial, public and personal travel within and through the County of Otero.

## A. Existing Transportation Conditions

The transportation system within Otero County's jurisdiction consists of 1,600 miles of roads, including state highways, local residential streets, and platted roadways. Otero County currently has six maintenance districts to provide maintenance and repair to roadways in the county. There are several major US highways throughout its region. US Highway 54 provides four-lane travel south to El Paso and two-lane traffic north to Albuquerque. US Highway 70 provides a four-lane highway west to Las Cruces and east to Ruidoso and Roswell. US 82 provide travel east to Cloudcroft and Artesia. Several New Mexico State Highways—6563, 130, 521, 244, and 24—provide travel between the mountain communities of High Rolls, Mayhill, Weed, Pinon, Sacramento and Timberon. Other State roads include NM State 506 across the McGregor Range and NM 213 to Chaparral.

### 1. Road Classifications

For the purpose of the transportation map (Figure 15-1), the roads were functionally classified according to their use. The road system of Otero County consists of three classifications: arterials, collectors, and local streets. Below are the definitions of each classification type (Highway Functional Classification Concepts, Criteria, and Procedures, FHWA)

- Arterials - These roads serve communities that don't have a principal arterial system such as an interstate or expressway. They provide inter-city and inter-county service. The trip length and travel density is larger than on the collector systems. Travel is at relatively high speed with minimal interference to through movement.
- Collectors - These roads typically collect traffic from local roads and feed it onto arterials.
- Local - Local roads provide access from local (primarily residential) areas to collectors.

### 2. Road Conditions

The County road system comprises arterial roadways of either standard hot-mixed paving or double-seal penetration surfaces (approximately 13 percent of County roadways), while the majority of rural roadways are bladed and unsurfaced. Most collector and local roadways within the County are dedicated to Otero County, except the State roads mentioned previously.

Typical County roadways do not incorporate standard curb and gutter or sidewalks in their design due to the rural nature of the roadway. In addition, arterial roadways do not require these elements. The incorporated municipal entities within the County are responsible for each residential road section within each community.

The local New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) maintenance patrols conduct routine maintenance of the local State roads within the County limits. The County Road Department has six district maintenance patrols. These patrols conduct daily maintenance on the rural roadways within the County.

### **3. Public Transportation**

Public transportation is available to residents in the metropolitan area of Alamogordo by Z-Trans System. The Z-Trans system consists of one large 27- passenger bus, two smaller 13-passenger buses, ten 13-passenger vans, and one 15-passenger van. Of these, the large 27-passenger bus and four of the smaller 13-passenger buses offer transportation to the general public, while the remainder of the vehicles are for para-transit service for those with disabilities who are unable to travel on the fixed bus route system. Para-Transit provides curb-to-curb pick-up and drop-off for wheelchair-bound riders. Scheduled pick up / drop offs are generally within the City of Alamogordo. Typically, the Z-Trans system serves approximately 2,000 riders per month. Residents at the public meeting complained that there was no bus service between Tularosa and Alamogordo.

### **4. Airport**

The Alamogordo-White Sands Regional Airport is a general aviation airport owned and operated by the City of Alamogordo. It is located four miles west of Alamogordo on Airport Road, and provides commuter travel as well as delivery service.

The airport offers two runways – one paved and one dirt—a terminal building, maintenance shop, fire station, and 1,500 acres of fenced property. The facility has two employees and is served by an Essential Air Service (EAS) supported airline. Although the carrier may change, service is predicted to continue as long as EAS is available. The current air service is three non-stop flights to Albuquerque daily. Additionally, the airport has been designated a U S Forest Service Fire Tanker Base, which operates between April and June to provide air resources to assist firefighting efforts. The airport is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week except on Christmas and New Years Day.

The regional airport has the capability to accept medium to large aircraft. It currently accepts aircraft with a maximum weight limit of 120,000 lbs. on double tandem wheels, and 54,000 lbs. for single-wheel aircraft. The regional airport also has the capability to accept aircraft as large as 737 passenger planes. The regional airport, through expansion, may be able to accommodate larger aircraft in the future.

The airport has a variety of aircraft based on its field, including single and multi-engine airplanes, jets, gliders and ultra-light aircraft. The airport features two runway approaches. Runway 3:21 features asphalt surfaces in good condition. The runway length is 7,006 ft. x 150 ft wide and can handle the large commercial airplane traffic and a smaller dirt surface approach. Runway 16:34 is available for recreational and leisure use aircraft. The smaller dirt runway is 3,512 ft. x 200 ft. with an approach left and approach right.

Timberon airport, which has a small aircraft runway, is currently owned by Otero County due to legal issues. The County intends to rehabilitate this airport so that it can be recognized in FAA mapping and charts.

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The airport has fuel available, including 100LL Jet –A and Jet-A1+, and provides navigational aids and runway approach lighting. Approach and departure service is provided by Albuquerque ARTCC. There are hanger sites available as well as outdoor tie-down areas. The airport has a dining facility located adjacent to the runways for traveler comfort.

The nearest International Airport in the vicinity is El Paso International Airport, in El Paso, Texas, located less than 100 miles to the south, which hosts most all major carriers. Las Cruces Regional Airport is approximately 80 miles to the west of the County Seat, Alamogordo.

The Union Pacific Railroad also passes through Otero County carrying cargo, but does not stop in Alamogordo or offer passenger service. The public has complained about vehicle and pedestrian accidents, unguarded crossings and noise as the train speeds through town. The City of Alamogordo is working on developing a “quiet zone” along its route to mitigate the noise.

## **5. Trails**

The City of Alamogordo has a developing trail system. There is also a Rails-to-Trails program and a very extensive trail system in the Lincoln National Forest.

## **B. Transportation Issues**

Many of the rural communities still have dirt surfacing for local roadways. This results in airborne dust during the dry months, and flooding and washouts during rainstorms. Unsurfaced roadways diminish the quality of life for many rural residents of Otero County.

NMDOT typically provides grants to the County through the New Mexico State Road Fund Cooperative and also provides monthly financial support for operations. Due to the constraints of the State road fund agreements, these funds are required to be expended each year. This allows the County to remove and replace or repair only small portions of roadways annually. Other funding comes from the State school bus route appropriations and State capital improvements appropriations programs.

## **C. Desired Future Transportation Conditions**

Besides repaving or overlaying existing roadways, the County should plan on scheduled hot mix paving, or double-penetration surfacing of at least an additional 100 miles of existing dirt roadways over the next ten years. County Road 506 South of Alamogordo should be scheduled for paving as monies are made available. An inventory of roads and streets should be established to provide a clear and accurate guide for prioritizing paving/repaving projects.

The local scenic by-ways attract recreational vehicles and tourism traffic to the area. Recreational vehicle scenic routes and retreats, easy access to hiking and biking trails and other commercial services related to transportation should be a priority for continued growth and economic development. Residents also want reliable public transportation, particularly for those who commute between Alamogordo and Mescalero or Tularosa for work or shopping.

## D. Transportation Goals

### **TG 1. Provide a safe, realistic, efficient and integrated transportation system to serve the present and future mobility needs of all the residents of Otero County.**

Objective 1. Provide an efficient network of streets and roadways that will allow for a smooth flow of vehicular traffic (NMDOT designation Level of Service C). Roads should be designed to meet the needs of the residents without detracting from the rural character of the County.

- Strategy a. Establish a well-defined street hierarchy of local, collector and arterial roads.
- Strategy b. Perfect the County road easements as necessary.
- Strategy c. Develop road grid and drainage plans that are followed for the dedication of easements.
- Strategy d. Use County planners to review proposed streets within the County.
- Strategy e. Design roads and traffic controls to optimize safe traffic flow by minimizing turning, uncontrolled access and frequent stops on arterial roadways.
- Strategy f. Prepare traffic engineering studies for proposed County street improvements.
- Strategy g. Develop a safe, all-weather alternate route to be used in the event of closure of US Highway 82

Objective 2. Provide standards for local roads (in residential areas) that promote traffic safety and meet residential transportation needs.

- Strategy a. Ensure design standards for local residential roads to discourage non-local traffic and minimize disruption of the terrain.
- Strategy b. Bring all streets within the County up to standards adequate to be accepted for maintenance by the County Road Maintenance Department.
- Strategy c. Develop traffic control standards to promote traffic safety and minimize through-traffic in residential neighborhoods.
- Strategy d. Require a traffic impact analysis where new development is projected to cause a significant increase in traffic volume on nearby County streets.
- Strategy e. Provide for safe access to and from major and minor arterial streets and from major arterial streets to major US highways
- Strategy f. Develop an access control policy for property along arterial streets to minimize access points, reduce congestion and prevent other unsafe traffic conditions.
- Strategy g. Ensure that every at-grade railroad crossing has proper signals and closures.

Objective 3. Provide adequate levels of maintenance of all improved components of the transportation system, including roadways, sidewalks, bicycle facilities and roadway drainage systems.

- Strategy a. Prepare a repaving plan that includes estimated costs, a funding strategy, and proposed project phasing for resurfacing and new road construction, as well as bicycle and sidewalk amenities.
- Strategy b. Develop an equipment replacement program based on a five-year turn-around in the equipment inventory currently on file for all County road maintenance vehicles and equipment.
- Strategy c. Construct a new Road Department facility to provide adequate work space, storage and offices to proficiently provide a high level of service to County residents.
- Strategy d. Consider expanding the duties of the Road Department Maintenance personnel to include maintenance and repair of all County vehicles in the fleet. Additional auto mechanics could provide this service, without having to contract services to outside sources.

**Objective 4. Air Travel: Provide for safe air travel to and from the County Seat and surrounding communities.**

- Strategy a. Promote improving and expanding the regional airport to accommodate anticipated increased air travel to the area.
- Strategy b. Recognize advances in air travel and anticipate that additional airstrips may be part of the County infrastructure in the future. Private runways for residential developments or individuals may be incorporated into the subdivision process.
- Strategy c. Complete improvements to the Timberon Airport so that it can be recognized in FAA mapping and charts.

**Objective 5. Promote transportation alternatives to the automobile.**

- Strategy a. Promote future public transportation between communities within the County.
- Strategy b. Accommodate bicycle use on roads as alternative transportation.
  - Incorporate bike lanes or ASHTO shoulders into road repaving.
  - Re-stripe roads with adequate widths to accommodate bike lanes.
  - Work with NMDOT to establish a bike route to Holloman AFB.
- Strategy c. Use and update the capital improvements plan as needed.
- Strategy d. Coordinate with responsible entities: County Commission, State government, Federal government, local organizations and people.
- Strategy e. Involve citizens in the funding procedure.
- Strategy f. Elect representatives who support the funding of strategies in the County Comprehensive Plan.

**TG 2. Generate sufficient resources to enable the building and maintenance of infrastructure and to ensure that the proper infrastructure accommodates growth as it expands into outlying areas.**

- Strategy a. Require developers of new projects to pay for improvements to the County streets made necessary by their development.
- Strategy b. Enforce County subdivision regulations.

## E. Implementation of Transportation Goals

The New Mexico Department of Transportation is the chief source of information and funding for road improvements. Other sources for transportation improvements include funds from the Community Development Block Grant program, the State Legislature, and the Federal Aviation Administration. Table 15-1 lists actions, timing, responsibilities, and potential funding sources to implement the County's transportation goals.

**Table 15-1. Implementation of Transportation Goals**

<b>Implementation Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
Efficient road network	County Staff, NMDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Establish well-defined street hierarchy of local, collector, and arterial roads.</li><li>▪ Develop road grid and drainage plans to follow for dedication of easements; perfect easements as necessary.</li><li>▪ Design roads and traffic controls to optimize safe traffic flow: minimize turning, uncontrolled access and frequent stops on arterials.</li><li>▪ Prepare traffic engineering studies for proposed County street improvements.</li><li>▪ Develop a safe, all-weather alternate route to be used when US 82 is closed.</li></ul>	New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT)

Table 15-1 Continued

Implementation Action	Responsible Agency/Organization	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
Local Streets	County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish design standards for local residential roads to discourage non-local traffic and minimize terrain disruption.</li> <li>Develop traffic control standards to promote traffic safety and minimize through traffic in residential neighborhoods.</li> <li>Bring all County streets up to standards adequate to be accepted for maintenance by County Road Maintenance Department.</li> <li>Use County planners to review proposed streets.</li> </ul>	County General Fund
New development	County Commission, County staff, private land developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require a traffic impact analysis where new development is projected to cause a significant increase in traffic volume on nearby County streets.</li> </ul>	Private land developers
Road Maintenance & Construction	County Staff, County Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare a plan including estimated costs, funding strategy, and project phasing for resurfacing and new road construction, as well as bicycle routes and sidewalk amenities.</li> <li>Develop an equipment replacement program based on a five-year turnaround in equipment inventory for all County road maintenance vehicles and equipment.</li> <li>Consider expanding the duties of the County Road Department maintenance staff to include maintenance and repair of all County fleet vehicles.</li> </ul>	New Mexico State Legislature, NMDOT
New Road Department facility	County Commission, County Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop funding to construct a new Road Department facility to provide adequate work space, storage and offices to provide a high level of service to County residents.</li> </ul>	Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), State Legislature,
Railway Crossings	County Commission, BNSF railways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify at-grade railroad crossings that do not have signals or gate closures.</li> <li>Work with BNSF railroad to ensure each road that crosses the railroad tracks at grade has appropriate safety devices.</li> </ul>	BNSF, NMDOT

**Table 15-1 Continued**

<b>Implementation Action</b>	<b>Responsible Agency/Organization</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Potential Funding Sources</b>
Hot mix asphalt paving	County Commission, County Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Purchase specialized equipment for maintenance of new Hot Mix Asphalt Paving roadways or budget funds for contracting future required maintenance on the new Timberon Highway portion and other hot mix road sections.</li> </ul>	NMDOT, New Mexico State Legislature
Air Travel	County Commission, City of Alamogordo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote improving and expanding the regional airport to accommodate the anticipated increased air travel to the area.</li> <li>▪ Incorporate approvals for private runways for residential developments or individuals into the subdivision process.</li> <li>▪ Complete improvements to the Timberon Airport.</li> </ul>	NMDOT Aviation Division. Federal Aviation Administration
Public transportation	County Commission, municipalities, private transportation organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote future public transportation between communities within the County.</li> </ul>	NMDOT, CDBG, New Mexico Department of Finance
Bicycle routes	County Staff, NMDOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incorporate bicycle lanes or ASHTO shoulders into road paving and repaving.</li> <li>▪ Re-stripe roads to provide adequate widths to accommodate bike lanes where possible.</li> <li>▪ Work with NM Department of Transportation to establish a bike route to Holloman AFB.</li> </ul>	NMDOT





## 16. Fire Protection, Emergency Medical Services, Law Enforcement

### A. Existing Fire Protection/Emergency Medical Service Conditions

Fire protection in Otero County is provided by the 20 County (volunteer) and Mescalero (paid) fire districts distributed equitably for adequate fire coverage. Each district is supervised by a fire chief and has the responsibility of providing adequate fire flows for its residents. Otero County administers and distributes funds from the quarter-cent County excise tax and the State of New Mexico fire funds to all 20 County Fire Departments. Mescalero Fire Department is currently on “new department” probation with the State Fire Marshals Office and will be receiving State Fire Funds when the probationary period is completed.

All 911 calls made from cell phones and land lines outside the City limits are routed through the Sheriff’s office. Calls made from land lines within the City connect to the Alamogordo Department of Public Safety. The Sheriff’s department dispatches appropriate resources from each fire district based on the location and type of incident.

All 21 fire districts have a mutual aid agreement that enables the districts to work together to best meet the needs of every emergency incident. Some departments have automatic mutual aid. When one district is called for a structural fire, as many as two to three other districts might be called out at the same time. In addition, the County has obtained mutual aid agreements with other counties in the region, including Chavez, Eddy, and Lincoln. The Fire Service Coordinator is currently working on brokering mutual aid agreements with Dona Ana and El Paso Counties.

Otero County also has a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with New Mexico State Forestry — a division of the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department — to coordinate resources to fight forest fires. The procedures and agreements are laid out in a Resource Mobilization Plan. The five County fire departments that have chosen to participate have agreed to provide fully trained and certified personnel available for deployment anywhere in the State, plus equipment needed to fight wildland fires. During the initial response to any wildland fire, the local fire district is in charge of fire fighting and resource coordination. If the property falls under the jurisdiction of a federal agency (for example, the USDA Forest Service, NM State Forestry or Bureau of Land Management) the agency’s Incident Commander will take over and be responsible for coordinating personnel and resources. Due to liability and safety issues, the Incident Commander will remove from firefighting duty any district firefighters without proper physical fitness certification (Red Cards). The Incident Commander can also remove from duty any district equipment that is not certified to meet certain standards.

All Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are provided through the fire departments and funded through the State “Fund Act” that distributes money to the fire departments (administered by the County). In most departments with EMS personnel, the Emergency Medical Technicians are also firefighters. In each of these fire departments there is an EMS captain who is in charge of crews and equipment. All EMS personnel are volunteers.

Hazardous Materials Response Team Members are included in the fire department personnel numbers. There is one member at level 5 (ICS), nine at Level 3 (Technician) and nine at Level 2 (Operations/Recon/Rescue). Listed below are personnel as of Fall 2004.

*Alamo West Volunteer Fire Department and EMS*

VFD members: 25

EMS members: 11

ISO rating: 5

*Bent Volunteer Fire Department*

VFD members: 9

EMS members: 1

ISO rating: 9

*Boles Acres Volunteer Fire Department and EMS*

VFD members: 14

EMS members: 6

ISO rating: 7

*Burro Flats Volunteer Fire Department and EMS*

VFD members: 8

EMS members: 4

ISO rating: 9

*Dog Canyon Volunteer Fire Department*

VFD members: 8

ISO rating: 9

*Dungan Volunteer Fire Department and EMS*

VFD members: 26

EMT members: 22

MD members: 1

ISO rating: 6

*Far South Volunteer Fire Department and EMS*

VFD members: 14

EMS members: 3

ISO rating: 6

*High Rolls Volunteer Fire Department and EMS*

VFD members: 22

EMS members: 4  
ISO rating: 6

*Jack Rabbit Flats Volunteer Fire Department*

VFD members: 12  
ISO rating: 9

*James Canyon Volunteer Fire Department and EMS*

VFD members: 30  
EMS members: 11  
ISO rating: 6

*La Luz Volunteer Fire Department*

VFD members: 10  
ISO rating: 7

*Mayhill Volunteer Fire Department*

VFD members: 9  
EMS members: 5  
ISO rating: 9

*Orogrande Volunteer Fire Department*

VFD members: 8  
ISO rating: 9

*Oro Vista Volunteer Fire Department and EMS*

VFD members: 22  
EMS members: 6  
ISO rating: 5

*Pinon Volunteer Fire Department*

VFD members: 5  
ISO rating: 9

*Sacramento/Weed Volunteer Fire Department and EMS*

VFD members: 22

EMS members: 6

ISO rating: 9

*Sixteen Springs Volunteer Fire Department*

VFD members: 7

ISO rating: 9

*Sunspot Volunteer Fire Department and EMS*

VFD members: 13

EMS members: 2

ISO rating: 8

*Timberon Volunteer Fire Department and EMS*

VFD members: 16

EMS members: 6

ISO rating: 9

*Upper Cox Canyon Volunteer Fire Department and EMS*

VFD members: 7

EMS members: 3

ISO rating: 9

## **B. Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services Issues**

Mountain districts have poor access to water for firefighting. These districts need more storage capacity and tankers that can deliver water. The lack of water in mountain districts for firefighting has contributed to poor Insurance Services Organization (ISO) ratings, which are based on how much water each department can deliver and how well. (Poor ISO ratings of 9 or 10 are caused by poor availability of water and means for delivery.) Homeowner's insurance rates are affected by ISO ratings; poor ratings mean higher insurance rates. Also, the State uses ISO ratings to determine the distribution of fire funds, so the mountain fire districts with poor ISO ratings are losing funds from the State.

Staffing is an ongoing problem for all of the fire departments. The declining number of volunteers is a nationwide problem. One reason recruitment of volunteers is down is because volunteer firefighters are required to maintain the same certifications and training levels as paid professional firefighters. These requirements are difficult for volunteers to meet. The volunteers who are already part of the County Fire Service are enthusiastic and dedicated. In the mountains, there is a pool of retirees who volunteer. In the basin, the departments are staffed by younger volunteers. Many come from Holloman Air Force Base, where they are stationed, to

volunteer. Largely, the issue is awareness, so many fire chiefs have recruitment drives to let the community know of the need for volunteers. If funds could be found to pay firefighters for the time they are on-call, recruitment could be expected to increase dramatically.

Training is a perpetual issue, especially for departments in remote locations. Training is available in the County, but volunteers have to travel down the mountain to Alamogordo where two adjunct instructors for the State Fire Academy conduct the training sessions. Occasionally, trainers travel to the mountain fire stations, but several stations are so remote that trainers and inspectors do not visit them often enough. In the mountain districts, the average age of volunteer firefighters is 65. Training and certification is burdensome for these volunteers, who simply want to give back to their communities and feel productive. Requiring these volunteers to travel long distances for training is problematic. In the basin, volunteers are younger working people, and it is hard for them to take time from their jobs for training.

The availability of training is less of an issue for Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), although funding is a problem. State Fire Funds help pay for training for firefighters but not for EMTs. Some funds for EMT training come from the quarter-cent County excise tax, but these funds are not enough to cover the considerable expense of maintaining an EMT license. There are training conferences available throughout New Mexico and nearby at New Mexico State University. American Medical Response (AMR) offers continuing education courses on a regular basis.

Otero County needs more emergency medical services. Oro Grande and Tularosa are currently trying to start clinics. Tularosa has a medical clinic and Oro Grande is trying to start one.

## **C. Desired Future Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services**

In the future, it would be desirable for all firefighters and EMTs to be paid for the time spent on-call. This will significantly improve recruitment and retention.

More trainers would travel from the State Fire Academy to local fire stations to conduct training sessions. Trainers would travel to one mountain location where firefighters from the surrounding fire districts could attend, reducing the distance they are required to travel. The ISO requires a minimum of 24 hours of training a year per firefighter for structural fire fighting. Part of these hours would be provided at local training sessions, and the remainder would require travel. AMR would pay a portion of the training costs for EMTs who also work part time for AMR's ambulance service.

In addition, fire districts with high ISO ratings would receive enough funds to improve their ratings. Money is a limiting factor to improvement. Improving an ISO rating requires purchasing equipment or obtaining resources that improve the ability to deliver sufficient quantities of water for firefighting. The amount of funds each department receives is determined by its ISO rating – the better its rating, the more funds it gets. The State sets aside fire funds to be distributed among the fire districts, but due to ISO ratings, not all fire departments can get full funding. Approximately half of the fire funds each year revert to the State General Fund. Some of this surplus should be distributed to fire departments to improve their ISO ratings or assist in needs assessments.

Each department will receive a needs assessment, performed by the State Fire Marshals Office, at least once every five years. This will ensure that each department has the appropriate resources and up-to-date equipment for firefighting. Performing regular needs assessments will also ensure that the fire departments receive the maximum amount of State fire funds. Currently, the State Fire Marshall's office sends inspectors to Otero County to inspect and audit all

departments with ISO ratings of 9 or 10. This needs assessment indicates what each department can do to improve their rating. Most departments with high ratings are already working on improvements and simply need to request an ISO inspection.

A future goal is for all fire departments to have low ISO ratings and the appropriate equipment for effective fire fighting, including fire trucks and tankers. The State Finance Authority provides loans for purchasing needed equipment.

Another future goal would be to upgrade the County's radio communication system and coordinate it with the Sheriff's system. There is currently a three-phase plan to complete the County upgrade. The County requested \$160,000 from the Federal Homeland Security for this year's first phase, which involves purchasing or replacing 13 repeaters (a device that receives a signal and moves it forward to another receiver or tower) throughout the County. One of these repeaters will be microwave. If Homeland Security does not approve the funding request, the County will apply for firefighter assistant grants or investigate leases or alternative purchasing options.

In addition, each health clinic in the County should have a paid position for an EMT, as the clinics in Chaparral and Tularosa do currently.

## **D. Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services Goals**

### **FP& EMS Goal 1. Upgrade the entire County radio communications system.**

Strategy a. Continue grant applications to fund the upgrade.

Strategy b. Execute a lease or purchase agreement to pay for needed equipment.

Strategy c. Coordinate the fire and EMS radio communication systems with that of the County Sheriff's Department.

## **I. Fire Protection**

### **FP Goal 1. Increase the number of available trained firefighters in the County.**

Strategy a. Raise or designate funds to pay firefighters for the hours they spend fighting fires.

Strategy b. Increase local opportunities for training, particularly for those in remote mountain areas.

- Schedule more training sessions in more remote mountain areas that could accommodate several area departments.

**FP Goal 2. Improve insurance (ISO) ratings of existing County fire departments.**

- Strategy a. Schedule needs assessments at each fire department every five years to encourage continuing improvement.
- Strategy b. Identify or raise funds to purchase necessary equipment or other resources, particularly fire trucks and tanker trucks, and maximum award of State fire funds.
- Strategy c. Encourage State Fire Fund surpluses to be distributed to fire departments to improve their ISO ratings.

**2. Emergency Medical Services**

**EMS Goal 1. Increase the number of trained emergency medical technicians.**

- Strategy a. Identify or raise funds to pay emergency medical technicians for the hours they spend rendering service.
- Strategy b. Identify or raise funds to defray the cost of emergency medical services training required to obtain or maintain one's license.

**E. Implementation of Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services Goals**

**Table 16-1. Implementation of Fire and Emergency Medical Services Goals**

Implementation Action	Responsible Agency/Organization	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
Upgrade County radio communication system	County Commission, County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Continue grant applications for funding and/or execute a lease or purchase agreement.</li><li>▪ Coordinate with Sheriff's Department.</li></ul>	County General Fund, grants
More trained firefighters	County Commission, County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Pay firefighters for hours spent fighting fires.</li><li>▪ Increase local training opportunities.</li></ul>	County General Fund, grants
Improve insurance ratings	County Commission, County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Schedule needs assessment every five years</li><li>▪ Purchase fire trucks and tanker trucks.</li><li>▪ Encourage state fire fund surpluses to go to fire departments to improve ISO ratings.</li></ul>	County General Fund, grants, state fire funds
More trained emergency medical technicians	County Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Pay EMTs for hours spent rendering services</li><li>▪ Defray cost of training required to obtain or keep license</li></ul>	County General Fund, grants



## F. Existing Law Enforcement Conditions

The Sheriff's Department coordinates law enforcement and public safety for Otero County. All 911 emergency calls from cell phones are routed through the Sheriff's office. All 911 emergency calls from cell phones and land lines located outside the City limits are routed through the Sheriff's office. Calls made from land lines within the City connect to the County Department of Public Safety in Alamogordo. The operator at the Sheriff's Department dispatches information to the closest responders and sends the appropriate response team from local police or fire departments and the County Sheriff's Department based on the location and type of incident.

The Sheriff's Department operates out of a main office in Alamogordo. Officers at sub-stations in Chaparral and the Sacramento Mountains can use computers to log-in their reports, which are sent to the main office and logged into the mainframe computer. The Sheriff's Department has an arrangement to form a major crime team that coordinates efforts among officers from Alamogordo Public Safety, New Mexico state patrollers, and Otero County officers to address the crime across jurisdictions.

The County Sheriff's Department operates on a budget funded out of the Otero County General Fund. The Sheriff's Department also receives some funds from the Federal government for Federal property within the County in lieu of taxes. Listed below are personnel as of Fall 2004.

### *United States Border Patrol*

Agents assigned to Otero County: 53

### *New Mexico State Police*

State police assigned to Otero County (District 8): 11

State Police Troopers: 9

### *Otero County Sheriff Department*

Sheriff and Deputies: 26

### *Alamogordo Department of Public Safety – Police*

Full-time police officers (also trained as firefighters): 68

### *Tularosa Police Department*

Full-time police officers: 8

Dispatchers: 4

Animal control officers: 1

### *Cloudcroft Police Department*

Full-time police officers: 3

Reserve officer: 1

### *Alamogordo Animal Control*

Animal control officers: 5

## G. Law Enforcement Issues

Law enforcement in Otero County is controlled by the County Sheriff, who is an elected official. The physical geography of the County presents response time, coverage and funding challenges. Because of the size of the County, County manpower limitations and land management responsibilities, there are several cooperating agreements with agencies. Law enforcement is provided through the cooperative efforts of multiple agencies. The sheriff is the highest ranking law enforcement official in the County.

## H. Desired Future Law Enforcement Services

In the future, the Sheriff's Department, in cooperation with other agencies, would provide 24-hour coverage throughout Otero County with an enhanced response time. The County will promote community education and involvement towards prevention, with enhanced volunteerism and enhanced participation of reserve deputies.

## I. Law Enforcement Goals

### LE Goal 1. Provide 24-hour law enforcement coverage by the Sheriff's Department throughout Otero County

Strategy a. Secure an annual budget sufficient to hire enough officers to patrol on a 24-hour basis.

## J. Implementation of Law Enforcement Goals

Table 16-2. Implementation of Law Enforcement Goals

Implementation Action	Responsible Agency/Organization	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
24-hour law enforcement coverage	County Commission, County staff, other law enforcement agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Budget funds to hire adequate numbers of officers</li><li>▪ Cooperation based on existing agreements</li></ul>	County General Fund
Education and prevention	County Commission, County staff, other law enforcement agencies; volunteer sheriff's reserve deputies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Continue community education towards prevention.</li><li>▪ Enhance volunteerism in emergency situations.</li></ul>	County General Fund



## 17. Private Land Use

This chapter addresses land uses on privately owned land in the County.

### A. Existing Private Land Use Conditions

Approximately 11 percent, or 467,315 acres, of Otero County is privately owned. The remainder is managed by Federal agencies, State agencies, and Indian tribes. Located within the private land are three incorporated municipalities—Alamogordo, Tularosa, and Cloudcroft—as well as the communities of Bent, High Rolls/Mountain Park, Holloman Air Force Base, La Luz, Mayhill, Mescalero, Orogrande, Pinon, Sacramento, Sunspot, Timberon and Weed. The five-mile area surrounding the Alamogordo City Limits is within the city's planning and platting jurisdiction.

### B. Private Land Use Issues

#### 1. Holloman Air Force Base

Federal agencies have their own concerns about the interface between Federal and private land. Holloman Air Force Base, for example, is seeking assurance that the land surrounding their operations will continue to be compatible with neighboring land use so their flying mission can continue without adversely impacting the community's safety or noise tolerance. It has proposed an Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) surrounding the base operations. An AICUZ study extensively analyzes the effects of noise, aircraft accident potential, existing land use, and proposed development around military installations and provides land use compatibility recommendations. A primary objective is to share information with neighboring communities so that they can make educated decisions on land use planning and zoning actions that may affect the Air Force flying mission. Other land use compatibility issues with the Air Force fall within the category of real estate actions such as restrictive easements and fee simple acquisition; these actions are implemented only when the associated safety risks are unacceptable to the installation commander or the mission is threatened.

To generate noise contours, the study gathers and enters into a computer-modeling program specific data on aircraft flying and maintenance operations. The program analyzes aircraft performance characteristics and flight profiles for typical aircraft operations to determine the noise for an average busy day over a 24-hour period. The computer summarizes the different noise levels by all aircraft and plots the noise contours. The Clear Zone and Accident Potential Zone (APZ) configurations are based on statistical analyses of past aircraft accidents. As 27 percent of all aircraft accidents happened in the Clear Zone, or area abutting the runway end, it is the most hazardous. The Air Force has attempted to acquire control of the land in this zone through purchase or easements. APZ I is an area beyond the Clear Zone where approximately 10 percent of all aircraft accidents are likely to occur. APZ II is an area beyond APZ I having a 6 percent potential for aircraft accidents. Proper land use planning and controls are strongly encouraged in the APZs to protect the public safety and welfare.

## 2. Development in Alamogordo

The total population of Otero County in 2000 was 62,298, with more than half—35,582— living within the City limits of Alamogordo. The County population is projected to grow by 11,050 more people to reach a total of 73,348 by 2030. Alamogordo's Comprehensive Plan projected the proportion of County residents living in Alamogordo and its immediate surroundings to increase to 72 percent of the County population by 2020. In its Comprehensive Plan 2000, Alamogordo estimated that current water supplies were expected to be sufficient to serve an estimated 40,000 residents under normal circumstances. Other planning assumptions made by the City were

- Infill development within the urbanized part of Alamogordo is limited.
- Large areas of otherwise developable land owned by Federal and State agencies will not be available for urban uses.
- As the City sits at the base of the Sacramento Mountains, development is limited to some extent by the area's susceptibility to flooding from the mountain canyons and arroyos that drain through town.
- Accessibility is a limiting factor for growth in newly developing areas that do not have adequate connections to the region's transportation system. Access to a large amount of potential development in the area south of Panorama Boulevard was recently created by the new railroad crossing and connection to US 54 at the South Scenic Drive extension.
- Improvements, such as those just mentioned, at the developing edge of the existing urbanized area will require cooperation and joint planning between the City and the County.

The greatest opportunity for single-family residential growth is in the area east of US 54 and south of Ocotillo Drive, within vacant private lands that have access to City water and sewer service. This area is anticipated to absorb much of the single-family development within the next 20 years. Residential areas west of US 54 and south of US 70 around Walker and Collins Avenues are also expected to grow, as well as the area east of North Scenic Drive, north of Indian Wells Road, and west of Oregon Avenue due to available land and services.

The area with the greatest potential for multi-family growth, including mobile homes, is bordered by US 70/82 on the north, Airport Road on the west, US 54 on the east and the Alamogordo airport on the south. Zoned for manufactured housing units, it is expected to develop significantly by the year 2020 due to its proximity to Holloman Air Force Base.

Future retail growth will probably concentrate in the southwest area of the city along US 70/82 and US 54, where there has already been commercial growth at the interchange. A long narrow area west of White Sands Boulevard is zoned for industrial use. Another prime industrial area is in the region north of and including the Alamogordo-White Sands Regional Airport.

Joint management of growth of unincorporated areas adjacent to Alamogordo can be accomplished through joint planning and platting review and extraterritorial zoning. A cooperative arrangement to manage development in identified growth areas could benefit both the City and County in the future.

### **3. Tularosa Development**

The Village of Tularosa's population was 2,864 in 2000, down from a peak of 3,200 persons in 1970. The Village is projected to grow steadily to 3,760 persons by 2030. Its preferred land use scenario focused on retaining low density residential development in the Village, revitalizing its historic areas and structures, particularly the Old Red Brick school building, and renovating or redeveloping vacant and dilapidated structures, particularly along US 54 south of Fresno for commercial uses. It also seeks to preserve agriculture as an option, without infringing on landowner's property rights. Potential areas for annexation include the area north of Tularosa Creek and the area south of Bookout Road. The Village has imposed a moratorium on new water connections outside its boundaries because of inadequate water supplies and rights. Village policy has been to use available resources to first benefit its residents.

As with other municipalities, cooperation between the Village and the County on future land use decisions can benefit both jurisdictions.

### **4. Development in the Unincorporated Area of the County**

Residential densities of new urban area development range from about three to four families per acre to one to three families per acre in the Tularosa, La Luz, Boles Acres, Dog Canyon Estates, and mountain resort areas in the Sacramentos. In the Alamogordo or Tularosa areas development is on relatively flat land, with slopes a maximum of five or six percent. In Cloudcroft and in the summer homes located on private lands throughout the Sacramento Mountains new homes often sit on steep hillsides, some of which may reach 25 percent grade (25 feet vertical per 100 feet of horizontal distance.)

The most important privately-owned areas for growth are those in the Alamogordo-La Luz-Tularosa urbanizing area. The second most important area for residential development will be the mountain area, while the third will be the very southwest corner of the County, the Orogrande areas, and other isolated private ownerships. The southeasterly portion of the County had been developing into agriculture uses.

### **5. Land Use Controls**

Potential County implementation of land use controls is a heavily debated issue in the County. Both Alamogordo and Tularosa enforce zoning ordinances. The County has a subdivision ordinance but does not impose zoning controls. The lack of zoning provides no regulatory control of desirable or undesirable development. The County must use other means to protect agricultural land and preserve current land uses. The enactment of land use controls in unincorporated portions of the County should be presented to County residents for a vote.

If the County prefers to accomplish its goals without County-wide zoning, it could consider creating Special Zoning Districts in particular areas, as some Socorro County residents have done. The State municipal code (NMSA 1978 3-21-18) allows special zoning districts of no more than 20,000 acres each to be created by a majority of landowners in areas of a county that has no general zoning ordinance and are outside of incorporated municipalities. Special zoning districts may be an appropriate solution for areas in need of special protection, such as Holloman's AICUZ impact area, prime agricultural lands, scenic areas, or the areas surrounding Alamogordo that are facing growth pressure.

State law provides for overlapping city and county planning and platting jurisdiction within an area five miles outside the City of Alamogordo's limits. This helps the City and County to coordinate planning issues within the extraterritorial area where development is occurring. As the City grows and comes into contract with county development, incompatibilities could occur between infrastructure systems, streets, and other features. There is a need to coordinate City and County development standards to enhance land use and infrastructure compatibility in the long run.

## C. Desired Future Private Land Use Conditions

The County may establish land use controls sufficient to regulate undesirable or unsafe development, foster desirable development, and promote residential and commercial development compatible with Holloman Air Force Base's flying mission. Joint management of growth in unincorporated areas adjacent to municipalities can be accomplished through joint planning and platting review and extraterritorial zoning. A cooperative arrangement to manage development in identified growth areas could benefit both the City and County in the future. It would also be beneficial to coordinate City and County development standards to enhance infrastructure compatibility in the long run.

## D. Private Land Use Goals

**LU Goal 1. The County Commission recognizes all private property rights as guaranteed by the US Constitution and defined by Federal and State law. The goal is to protect these property rights, while protecting the public health, safety and welfare of County residents.**

**The County's concern with private property rights encompasses two major issues. First the goal is to include the interests of Otero County residents in all decisions regarding the use of Federally and State-owned lands. Second, the County's goal is to ensure the rights of private property owners.**

- Strategy a. Enforce laws within jurisdiction of the County Commission.
- Strategy b. Develop a County network to keep citizens informed of current agendas and events of federal and state agencies.
- Strategy c. Solicit property owners' opinions of proposed action.
- Strategy d. Negotiate to reach settlement of differences.
- Strategy e. Use due process in courts to settle differences.
- Strategy f. Adopt the report of the Public Land Use Advisory Committee.

**LU Goal 2. Develop an educated, informed and involved citizenry in community planning and decision-making.**

- Strategy a. Use all means to communicate about the planning process.
  - Use newspapers, radio and television programs, internet
- Strategy b. Motivate citizens to get involved in planning.

- Use a comprehensive plan committee and a professional facilitator if needed to review and update the County plan every five years.

**LU Goal 3. The County Commission reviews, updates, and enforces County regulations (subdivision ordinances), codes, databases, and plans.**

- Strategy a. Designate an enforcement officer responsible to the Sheriff's Department as the person responsible for enforcement of County ordinances.
- Strategy b. Use the County assessor records and County mapping resources to identify subdivision violations.
- Strategy c. Hire a County code enforcement officer to monitor activity and enforce adopted ordinances.
- Strategy d. Review and update ordinances and codes every three years.

**LU Goal 4. Provide for orderly and appropriate growth in the County while protecting individual property rights.**

- Strategy a. The County Commission may consider methods to regulate the use, density and massing of development.
  - Recognize current and historical land uses through mapping. Traditional zoning typically establishes zones that regulate use, setbacks, and height and other physical parameters.
  - Adopt regulations that codify current and historical land uses based on existing assessor classifications and require a special use permit or other process to build a certain number of units or change the use.
  - Investigate the feasibility of adopting performance zoning or growth guidance systems that would evaluate prospective developments based on their project impact on the local area.
- Strategy b. Enact joint powers agreement to establish joint zoning ordinance, joint planning and zoning authority in the extraterritorial areas surrounding municipalities.
- Strategy c. Update County subdivision ordinance.
- Strategy d. Promote limiting the use of Eminent Domain by government entities in Otero County unless stringent policy conditions apply. Eminent domain should be the option of last resort and must include safeguards and oversight to protect landowners. Eminent domain will only be used in the unincorporated parts of the County when a government agency, including Otero County or any other public agency that manages land in the County, has exhausted every other alternative to overcome a critical obstacle to an important project. Before a public agency utilizes this option, it will conduct open, public discussions with residents, property owners and the County Commission.



**LU Goal 5. Ensure Holloman Air Force Base Mission is not jeopardized by incompatible growth. Holloman AFB is a significant contributor to the County's economy.**

- Strategy a. Work with Holloman AFB to promote further consideration of the Air Force Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) land use recommendations.
- Strategy b. Adopt the Holloman Air Installation Compatible Use Zone as County policy and attach the report as a technical appendix to the County Comprehensive Plan.
- Strategy c. Implement the Holloman Air Installation Compatible Use Zone through cooperation between adjacent landowners and the base.

**LU Goal 6. Support traditional land uses to maintain the County's custom and culture.**

- Strategy a. Respect traditional uses (i.e., ranching and agriculture) when there are conflicts between established agricultural uses and new adjoining landowners.

## Otero County Comprehensive Plan



## E. Implementation of Private Land Use Goals

Many of the private land use goals and strategies are within the authority of the Otero County Commission to accomplish. Others require negotiation with Federal and State agencies. Table 17-1 lists actions, timing, responsibilities, and potential funding sources where relevant to implement the County's private land use goals.

**Table 17-1. Implementation of Private Land Use Goals**

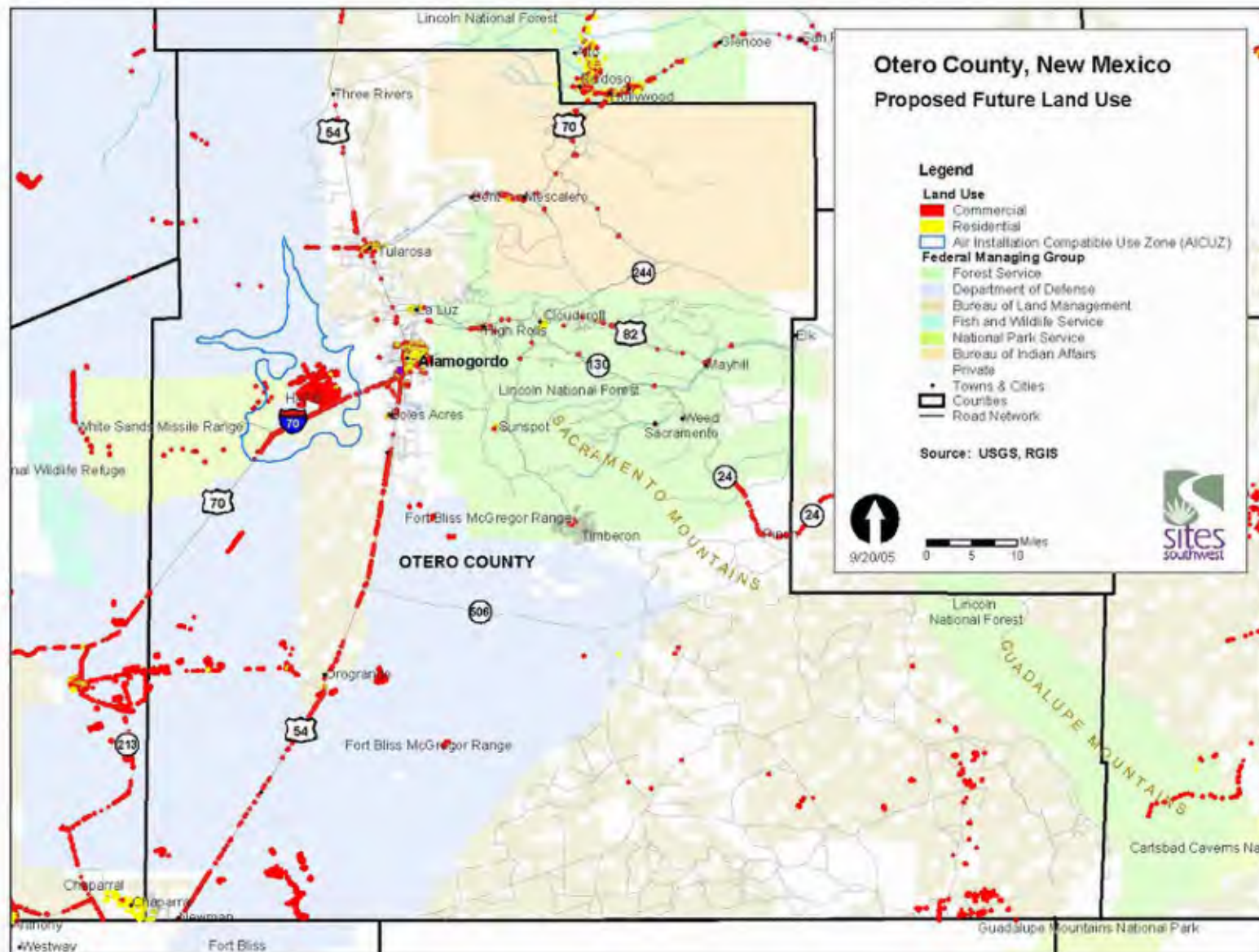
Implementation Action	Responsible Agency/Organization	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
Otero County interests in Federal and State decisions; private property rights	County Commission, County staff, Public Land Use Advisory Committee, local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enforce laws within jurisdiction of County Commission.</li> <li>▪ Develop County network to keep citizens informed on current agendas and events of federal and state agencies.</li> <li>▪ Solicit property owners' opinions of proposed action</li> <li>▪ Negotiate to reach settlement of differences.</li> <li>▪ Use due process in courts to settle differences.</li> <li>▪ Adopt the report of the Public Land Use Advisory Committee.</li> </ul>	General Fund
Educated, informed and involved citizenry	County Commission, County staff, Public Land Use Advisory Committee, local media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use all means to communicate about the planning process—newspapers, television, radio, internet.</li> <li>▪ Motivate citizens to get involved in planning.</li> <li>▪ Update Comprehensive Plan every five years.</li> </ul>	Community Development Block Grant
Enforcement of County regulations	County Commission, County staff, County Attorney	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Designate an enforcement officer responsible to the Sheriff's Department as the person responsible for enforcement of County ordinances.</li> <li>▪ Use County assessor records and County mapping resources to identify subdivision violations.</li> <li>▪ Hire a County code enforcement officer to monitor activity and enforce adopted ordinances.</li> <li>▪ Review and update ordinances and codes every three years.</li> </ul>	County General Fund

Table 17-1 Continued

Implementation Action	Responsible Agency/Organization	Tasks	Potential Funding Sources
Orderly and appropriate growth	County Commission, County staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize current and historical land uses from County assessor classifications.</li> <li>Map and adopt regulations that codify current and historical land uses and require a special use permit or other process to build a certain number of units or change the use.</li> <li>Consider adopting performance zoning or growth guidance systems that would evaluate prospective developments based on their projected impact on the local area.</li> <li>Update County subdivision ordinance</li> </ul>	County General Fund, Community Development Block Grant
Joint management of development surrounding Alamogordo	County Commission, County staff, City of Alamogordo selected officials and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold joint City/County discussion of the potential to establish joint planning and zoning authority on 5-mile extraterritorial area surrounding Alamogordo, including an extraterritorial zoning ordinance and zoning process.</li> </ul>	Not applicable
Eminent Domain	County Commission, Public Land Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use eminent domain in Otero County only as a last resort after open public discussions.</li> </ul>	Not applicable
Holloman Air Force Base protection	County Commission, Holloman Air Force Base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with Holloman AFB to promote further consideration of the Air Force Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) land use recommendations.</li> <li>Adopt the Holloman Air Installation Compatible Use Zone as County policy and attach the report as a technical appendix to the County Comprehensive Plan.</li> <li>Implement the Holloman Air Installation Compatible Use Zone through cooperation between adjoining land owners and the base.</li> </ul>	Not applicable
Traditional land uses	County Commission, Public Land Use Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect traditional ranching and agricultural interests when they conflict with new adjoining landowners.</li> </ul>	USDA Forest Service, NM Environment Dept., US Bureau of Land Management, NM State Engineer



Figure 17-2. Future Land Use



# 18. Appendices

## A. Bibliography

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- 3) Larson, Kenneth W. & Assoc. Comprehensive Plan for Otero County, Part I and II, May 1973.
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- 6) Otero County Economic Development Council, Draft Strategic Planning for Economic Development for Otero County, NM—2000.
- 7) Otero County Public Land Use Advisory Committee, Draft Interim Public Land Use Plan, Otero County, NM
- 8) South Central Mountain RC&D Council, Inc. Region 5—Tularosa, Great Salt, and Sacramento River Basins Regional Water Plan 2000-2040, May 2002.
- 9) State of New Mexico, Otero County Annual Financial Report, June 30, 2003.
- 10) Taschek Environmental Consulting. Alamogordo Comprehensive Plan 2000, March 4, 2003.

## B. County Income and Labor Characteristics

Table 18-1. 1999 - 2000 Income Characteristics of Otero County and the State of New Mexico

Income Characteristics	Otero County		State of New Mexico	
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total
<b>INCOME IN 1999</b>				
<b>Households</b>	<b>22,984</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>678,032</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Less than \$10,000	2,975	12.9%	84,527	12.5%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,918	8.3%	56,773	8.4%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	4,093	17.8%	107,287	15.8%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	4,028	17.5%	97,447	14.4%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	4,263	18.5%	115,315	17.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	3,688	16.0%	111,913	16.5%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1,255	5.5%	53,079	7.8%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	615	2.7%	34,045	5.0%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	65	0.3%	8,750	1.3%
\$200,000 or more	84	0.4%	8,896	1.3%
Median household income (dollars)	\$ 30,861	--	\$ 34,133	--
<b>Families</b>	<b>16,979</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>468,899</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Less than \$10,000	1,572	9.3%	40,302	8.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1,259	7.4%	32,250	6.9%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	2,754	16.2%	68,104	14.5%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	2,956	17.4%	66,251	14.1%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	3,540	20.8%	84,580	18.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	3,096	18.2%	88,776	18.9%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	1,112	6.5%	44,592	9.5%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	556	3.3%	29,091	6.2%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	61	0.4%	7,559	1.6%
\$200,000 or more	73	0.4%	7,394	1.6%
Median family income (dollars)	\$ 34,781	--	\$ 39,425	--
Per capita income (dollars)	\$ 14,345	--	\$ 17,261	--

Income Characteristics	Otero County		State of New Mexico	
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total
<b>POVERTY STATUS IN 1999 (Numbers below poverty level)</b>				
<b>Families</b>	2,644	--	68,178	--
Percent below poverty level	--	15.6%	--	14.5%
<b>Individuals</b>	11,737	--	328,933	--
Percent below poverty level	--	19.3%	--	18.4%
18 years and over	6,587	--	203,715	--
Percent below poverty level	--	15.4%	--	15.9%
65 years and over	895	--	26,341	--
Percent below poverty level	--	12.8%	--	12.8%

Source: US Census

**Table 18-2. Labor Force Characteristics of Otero County and the State of New Mexico**

Labor Force Characteristics	Otero County		State of New Mexico	
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>62,298</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,819,046</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</b>				
<b>Population 16 years and over</b>	<b>45,925</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>1,369,176</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
In labor force	27,478	59.8%	834,632	61.0%
Civilian labor force	23,879	52.0%	823,440	60.1%
Employed	21,934	47.8%	763,116	55.7%
Unemployed	1,945	4.2%	60,324	4.4%
Percent of civilian labor force	8.1%	--	7.3%	--
Armed Forces	3,599	7.8%	11,192	0.8%
Not in labor force	18,447	40.2%	534,544	39.0%
<b>Employed civilian population 16 years and over</b>	<b>21,934</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>763,116</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>OCCUPATION</b>				
Management, professional, and related occupations	6,212	28.3%	259,510	34.0%
Service occupations	4,117	18.8%	129,349	17.0%
Sales and office occupations	4,906	22.4%	197,580	25.9%



Labor Force Characteristics	Otero County		State of New Mexico	
	Number	% Total	Number	% Total
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	249	1.1%	7,594	1.0%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	3,577	16.3%	87,172	11.4%
Production, transportation, & mat'l moving occupations	2,873	13.1%	81,911	10.7%
<b>INDUSTRY</b>				
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	682	3.1%	30,529	4.0%
Construction	2,046	9.3%	60,602	7.9%
Manufacturing	1,628	7.4%	49,728	6.5%
Wholesale trade	259	1.2%	20,747	2.7%
Retail trade	2,796	12.7%	92,766	12.2%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	1,214	5.5%	35,710	4.7%
Information	245	1.1%	18,614	2.4%
Finance, insurance, real estate, & rental and leasing	1,043	4.8%	41,649	5.5%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	1,426	6.5%	71,715	9.4%
Educational, health and social services	4,410	20.1%	165,897	21.7%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	2,183	10.0%	74,789	9.8%
Other services (except public administration)	1,314	6.0%	38,988	5.1%
Public administration	2,688	12.3%	61,382	8.0%
<b>CLASS OF WORKER</b>				
Private wage and salary workers	13,331	60.8%	522,466	68.5%
Government workers	6,429	29.3%	173,189	22.7%
Self-employed workers in un-incorporated business	2,062	9.4%	64,108	8.4%
Unpaid family workers	112	0.5%	3,353	0.4%

Source: US Census

## C. Resources

### Land Use, Zoning and Community Character

#### ***NM Construction Industries Division***

<http://www.rld.state.nm.us/cid/>

The New Mexico Construction Industries Division is a state program that provides for the protection of life and property by adopting and enforcing building codes and standards. The Division is responsible for issuing residential and commercial building permits. The Division conducts field inspections for general building, electrical, mechanical and LP Gas code compliance and safety standards. Cities and counties with local building inspection offices must adopt the building codes and standards of the Division as a minimum standard.

The Division is also responsible for:

- Examinations and the issuance of licenses for contractors, and certificates of competence for journeymen.
- Review and approval of residential and commercial building plans for building code and accessibility requirements.
- The conduct of unlicensed contractor investigations.
- Code compliance and other complaints related to violations of the Construction Industries Licensing Act.

**For more information**, please contact:

Construction Industries Division  
Regulation and Licensing Department  
2550 Cerrillos Road  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
(505) 476-4700  
Email: [rlcid@state.nm.us](mailto:rlcid@state.nm.us)

#### ***Web site for building codes***

New Mexico Administrative Code: <http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmac/title14/T14C007.htm>

#### ***CDBG***

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/index.cfm>

Begun in 1974, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) is one of the oldest programs in HUD. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to many different types of grantees through several programs:

- Entitlement Communities: The program provides annual grants on a formula basis to entitled cities and counties to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.
- State Administered CDBG: States participating in the CDBG Program award grants only to units of general local government that carry out development activities. Annually each State develops funding priorities and criteria for selecting projects.
- Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program (Section 108 Program): Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) entitlement communities are eligible to apply for a guarantee from the Section 108 Loan Guarantee program. CDBG non-entitlement communities may also apply, provided that their State agrees to pledge the CDBG funds necessary to secure the loan. Non-entitlement applicants may receive their loan guarantee directly or designate another eligible public entity such as an industrial development authority, to receive it and carry out the Section 108 assisted project.
- Colonias: Texas, Arizona, California and New Mexico set aside up to 10 percent of their State CDBG funds for use in colonias.

### ***Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits***

National Park Service, Heritage Preservation Service

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/>

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program provides successful and cost-effective community revitalization. The program fosters private sector rehabilitation of historic buildings and promotes economic revitalization. It also provides a strong alternative to government ownership and management of such historic properties. Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives are available for buildings that are National Historic Landmarks, listed in the National Register, and that contribute to National Register Historic Districts and certain local historic districts. Properties must be income-producing and must be rehabilitated according to standards set by the Secretary of the Interior.

### ***Program Partners***

Jointly managed by the National Park Service and the Internal Revenue Service in partnership with State Historic Preservation Offices, the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program rewards private investment in rehabilitating historic buildings. Prior to the program, the U.S. tax code favored the demolition of older buildings over saving and using them. In 1976, the Federal tax code aligned with national historic preservation policy to encourage voluntary, private sector investment in preserving historic buildings.

The Historic Preservation Tax Incentives provide an invaluable tool to revitalize communities and preserve the historic places that give cities, towns, and rural areas their special character. The Historic Preservation Tax Incentives generate jobs, both during the construction phase and in the spin-off effects of increased earning and consumption. Rehabilitation of historic buildings attracts new private investment to the historic core of cities and towns and is crucial to the long-term economic health of many communities. Enhanced property values generated by the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program result in augmented revenues for local and state government through increased property, business, and income taxes. Historic Preservation Tax Incentives also create moderate and low-income housing in historic buildings.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives, Heritage Preservation Services (2255), National Park Service, 1201 Eye St. NW, Washington, DC 20005

Phone: Michael Auer at (202) 354-2031

FAX: (202) 371-1616

E-Mail: [nps\\_hps-info@nps.gov](mailto:nps_hps-info@nps.gov)

### **State Historic Preservation Tax Credits**

[http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/PROGRAMS/creditsloans\\_taxcredits.html](http://www.nmhistoricpreservation.org/PROGRAMS/creditsloans_taxcredits.html)

The State of New Mexico Investment Tax Credit program was created on January 1, 1984. The state income tax credit is available to owners of historic structures who accomplish qualified rehabilitation on a structure or stabilization or protection of an archaeological site. It is a two-part process. State applications are available on-line in MS Word format or from the office.

- Property must be individually listed in, or contributing to a historic district listed in the State Register of Cultural Properties. The property may be a personal residence, income-producing property (such as an apartment building or office), or an archaeological site.
- The State Cultural Properties Review Committee (CPRC) must approve the proposed rehabilitation work prior to the beginning of the project.
- The project term expires 24 months from the date of the original approval.
- The completed project must be documented in Part 2 of the application and presented to the CPRC for certification. Project expenses must be fully documented and submitted.
- Each program project carries a maximum of \$50,000, although the project costs may exceed this amount.
- Maximum credit is 50% of eligible costs of the approved rehabilitation or \$25,000 (50% of project maximum) or 5 years of tax liability, whichever is least. The credit is applied against New Mexico income taxes owed in the year the project is completed and the balance may be carried forward for up to four additional years.

#### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION**

Department of Cultural Affairs  
Villa Rivera Building, Room 320  
228 E. Palace Avenue  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
(505) 827-6320

### **USDA Cooperative Extension Service, Technical Assistance**

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov>

The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) has been an agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) since 1994.

CSREES advances knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities by supporting research, education, and extension programs in the Land-Grant University System and other partner organizations. CSREES doesn't perform actual research, education, and extension but rather helps fund it at the state and local level and provides program leadership in these areas:

- **National program leadership** to help states identify and meet research, extension, and education priorities in areas of public concern that affect agricultural producers, small business owners, youth and families, and others.

- **Federal assistance** in the form of an annual formula funding to land-grant universities and competitively granted funds to researchers in land-grant and other universities.

CSREES and its partners support advanced research and educational technologies that empower people and communities to solve problems and improve their lives on the local level, responding to quality-of-life issues such as:

- Improving agricultural productivity
- Creating new products
- Protecting animal and plant health
- Promoting sound human nutrition and health
- Strengthening children, youth, and families
- Revitalizing rural American communities

CSREES operates through an extensive network of state, regional, and county extension offices in every U.S. state and territory. The New Mexico extension service is based at NMSU, with the local extension office located in Deming.

#### **New Mexico State University**

<http://www.cahe.nmsu.edu/ces>

#### **Luna County Cooperative Extension Service**

<http://cahe.nmsu.edu/ces/>

**Address:** 829 South Silver Deming, NM 88030

**Phone:** (505) 546-8806

**Fax:** (505) 546-8806

**Email:** [luna@nmsu.edu](mailto:luna@nmsu.edu)

## **Transportation**

**NMDOT Highway Improvements Funds** <http://www.nmshtd.state.nm.us/main.asp?secid=11463>

The Highway Safety Improvement Program Section provides engineering services to:

- Develop, prioritize, and select roadway safety improvement projects on a statewide basis
- Coordinate with the Transportation Programs Division, Traffic Safety Bureau to administer a statewide transportation safety management system
- Assist other groups within NMDOT and other agencies in highway safety-related matters.

The NM Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) addresses the highway element and the engineering functional group as part of a more comprehensive traffic safety program operated by others both within and outside of the NMDOT. The HSIP is run from the NMDOT Transportation Planning Division, Project Planning Bureau. Other highway safety programs are run from other bureaus in various Divisions of NMDOT.

FHWA provides program oversight and federal aid for safety projects. The FHWA has also made city streets and county roads eligible for federal aid for safety projects, in addition state highways.

The HSIP Section has the responsibility to systematically analyze New Mexico's roadways, including available crash data, to identify roadway (state highway, county road, or city street) locations, sections, and elements in New Mexico that are currently determined to be hazardous or are forecasted with the likelihood of being hazardous to vehicular or pedestrian travel. On the basis of such analysis the HSIP section can conduct more detailed engineering studies of hazardous or potentially hazardous locations, sections and elements.

From these more detailed analyses suggested countermeasures in the form of safety improvement projects can be recommended, and federal funding can be incorporated to implement them.

The NM HSIP has 3 basic procedural components: Planning, Implementation, and Safety Effectiveness Evaluation.

**Planning includes:**

- Reviewing Roadway System for actual or potential hazards;
- Conducting engineering safety studies;
- Seeking guidance from others concerning proposed safety projects;
- Using Benefit/ Cost ratio as guidance for project selection;
- Establishing top priority for high benefit/cost projects, such as rumble strips on rural highway shoulders;

**Implementation includes:**

- Coordinating the placement of appropriate safety projects in metro TIPS and the STIP;
- Oversight of project design, letting, and construction performed by others.

**Safety Effectiveness Evaluation includes:**

- Conducting before and after studies where safety projects were implemented, examining crash data for up to 3 years before and after project placement
- Findings reported in annual report to NMDOT and FHWA.



Paving: <http://www.nmshtd.state.nm.us/main.asp?secid=11462>

The Pavement Management Section located in the Project Planning Bureau supports the Department's efforts to provide New Mexico with quality highways at minimum cost by providing information necessary to develop cost-effective highway pavement management strategies and to make informed decisions between competing highway projects.

This section evaluates pavement conditions on a statewide basis and predicts expected pavement deterioration so that pavement preservation, rehabilitation and reconstruction projects can be optimally scheduled.

GRIP: <http://nmgrip.com/link.asp?id=14956>

GRIP is an economic benefit package that will:

- create thousands of new jobs each year for the next six to eight years
- employ hundreds of New Mexico businesses
- have an \$8.4 billion positive impact on New Mexico's economy
- have a \$10.9 billion direct savings impact on the citizens of New Mexico in terms of commuter cost, safety and vehicle operating costs
- increase state personal income, mostly wages and salaries by \$170 million a year
- generate nearly \$90 million in direct gross receipt taxes on construction and millions more in payroll taxes.
- break down individual projects so local contractors can competitively bid.

GRIP will also enhance safety on New Mexico highways and roads.

***Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Non-urbanized Area Formula Grants***

[http://www.fta.dot.gov/legal/guidance/circulars/9000/433\\_1182\\_ENG\\_HTML.htm](http://www.fta.dot.gov/legal/guidance/circulars/9000/433_1182_ENG_HTML.htm)

Fact sheet: <http://www.fta.dot.gov/library/policy/prgms/nuafg.html>

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) carries out the Federal mandate to improve public mass transportation. As one of nine operating administrations or agencies within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), FTA is the principal source of financial assistance to America's communities for the planning, development and improvement of public transportation systems. Through FTA, the federal government provides financial and technical assistance and training to local transit systems, states and planning organizations.

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT

- **Formula Grant Programs** (matching ratio: 80% maximum federal share/minimum 20% local share) Urbanized Area Formula Grants for capital and operating assistance to transit agencies in urban (50,000 or more in population) areas.
  - - Non-urbanized Area Formula Grants for capital and operating assistance through the states to transit operators in non-urban (less than 50,000 in population) areas. A state must use a percentage (5-15%) of the funds it receives for inter-city bus service unless the state can certify that its inter-city bus needs have been met.

The goals of the nonurbanized formula program are: 1) to enhance the access of people in nonurbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation; 2) to assist in the maintenance, development, improvement, and use of public transportation systems in rural and small urban areas; 3) to encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all Federal funds used to provide passenger transportation in nonurbanized areas through the coordination of programs and services; 4) to assist in the development and support of intercity bus transportation; and 5) to provide for the participation of private transportation providers in nonurbanized transportation to the maximum extent feasible.

**Eligible Recipients:** State and local governments, non-profit organizations (including Indian tribes and groups), and public transit operators.

**Eligible Purposes:** Funds may be used for capital, operating, and administrative purposes.

**Allocation of Funding:** Funding is apportioned by a statutory formula based on the latest U.S. Census figures of areas with a population less than 50,000. The amount that the state may use for state administration, planning, and technical assistance activities is limited to 15 percent of the annual apportionment. States must spend 15 percent of the apportionment to support rural intercity bus service unless the Governor certifies that the intercity bus needs of the state are adequately met.

**Match:** The maximum Federal share for capital and project administration is 80 percent (except for projects to meet the requirement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Clean Air Act, or bicycle access projects, which may be funded at 90 percent.) The maximum Federal share for operating assistance is 50 percent of the net operating costs. The local share is 50 percent, which shall come from an undistributed cash surplus, a replacement or depreciation cash fund or reserve, or new capital.

**Funding Availability:** Year appropriated plus two years (total of three years)

**Contact:** The Office of Program Management, (202) 366-4020

### ***NMDOT Rural Transportation Assistance Program***

<http://www.nmshtd.state.nm.us/main.asp?secid=11225>

The State of New Mexico's Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) program offers training sessions, workshops, scholarships and other services to help improve transit systems. No local match is required. RTAP funding is available only to existing subrecipients, who must submit a written request for RTAP funds to the Transit & Rail Bureau Bureau Chief. Requests for RTAP funding are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.



Under contract with the Transit & Rail Bureau, the Alliance for Transportation Research (ATR) Institute through the University of New Mexico (<http://www.unm.edu/~atr>) coordinates training and provides technical support for New Mexico's rural transit providers and sub-grantees. Training and support are directed primarily to transit programs funded through the Federal Transit Administration's 5310 program, which serves senior and disabled populations, and 5311 program, which provides transit for any rural area or small town. In addition, the ATR Institute staffs the New Mexico Passenger Transportation Association (NMPTA), a non-profit transit advisory organization.

604 W. San Mateo Plaza  
Santa Fe, NM 87505 Voice: 505.827.0410 Fax: 505.827.0431

#### ***US Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration***

The FHWA provided Federal funds for a variety of transportation projects, including roadways, trails, rail, and transit. These funds cover not only basic infrastructure but enhancements such as streetscapes as well.

#### **Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)**

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/index.htm>

**SAFETEA-LU** was signed on August 10, 2005 by President George W. Bush and authorizes the Federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the 5-year period from 2005-2009.

SAFETEA-LU addresses safety, traffic congestion, efficiency in freight movement, intermodal connectivity, and the environment. SAFETEA-LU promotes more efficient and effective Federal surface transportation programs by focusing on transportation issues of national significance, while giving State and local transportation decision-makers flexibility to solve transportation problems in their communities.

SAFETEA-LU continues a strong fundamental core formula program emphasis coupled with targeted investment, featuring:

- *Safety* – A new core Highway Safety Improvement Program structured and funded to reduce highway fatalities almost doubles the funds for infrastructure safety and requires strategic highway safety planning, focusing on results. Other programs target specific areas of concern, such as work zones, older drivers, and pedestrians, including children walking to school.
- *Equity* – Building on TEA-21's Minimum Guarantee concept, the Equity Bonus program ensures that each state's return on its share of contributions to the Highway Trust Fund (in the form of gas and other highway taxes) is at least 90.5 percent in 2005, building toward a minimum 92 percent relative rate of return by 2008. Every state is guaranteed a specified rate of growth over its average annual TEA-21 funding level, regardless of its Trust Fund contributions. Selected states are guaranteed a share of apportionments and High Priority Projects not less than the state's average annual share under TEA-21.
- *Innovative finance* – Innovative changes, such as eligibility for private activity bonds, additional flexibility to use tolling to finance infrastructure improvements, and broader TIFIA and SIB loan policies, encourage the private sector to invest in highway infrastructure projects.

- *Congestion Relief* – States have more flexibility to manage congestion through road pricing. Real-time traffic management is promoted in all states to help improve transportation security and provide better information to travelers and emergency responders.
- *Mobility & Productivity* – SAFETEA-LU invests in core Federal-aid programs, as well as programs to improve interregional and international transportation, address regional needs, and fund critical high-cost transportation infrastructure projects of national and regional significance. Improved freight transportation is addressed in a number of planning, financing, and infrastructure improvement provisions throughout the Act.
- *Efficiency* – The Highways for LIFE pilot program will advance longer-lasting highways using innovative technologies and practices to speed up the construction of efficient and safe highways and bridges.
- *Environmental Stewardship* – SAFETEA-LU retains and increases funding for environmental programs of TEA-21 and adds new programs focused on the environment, including a pilot program for nonmotorized transportation and Safe Routes to School. SAFETEA-LU also includes significant new environmental requirements for the Statewide and Metropolitan Planning process.
- *Environmental Streamlining* – Changes aimed at improving and streamlining the environmental process for transportation projects includes provisions for a new environmental review process for highways, transit, and multimodal projects, with increased authority for transportation agencies, but also increased responsibilities for participation (e.g., a new category of "participating agencies" and notice and comment related to defining project purpose and need and determining alternatives).

## Infrastructure

### **NMED Rural Infrastructure Programs**

<http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/cpb/rip.html>

The Rural Infrastructure Program (RIP) was created in 1988 as part of the Rural Infrastructure Act to provide financial assistance to local authorities for the construction or modification of water supply facilities. The Rural Infrastructure Act was amended in 2001 to include construction or modification of wastewater facilities.

Because the funds are state monies, the application and approval process is streamlined, allowing the funds to be available within four to six weeks. The maximum loan amount in any single year is \$500,000.

The base interest rate is 3%, with a repayment schedule of up to 20 years. No grants are currently available but may be in the future.

Any incorporated city, town, village, county, mutual domestic association, or water and sanitation district whose water supply facility serves a population of less than ten thousand persons.

The approximate amount of loan money available as of June 30, 2005 is \$12 million.

Applications for placement on the priority list are accepted throughout the year.  
**Loan funds can be made available to projects within four to six weeks.**

***NMFA Rural Infrastructure Programs***

<http://www.nmfa.org/>

The New Mexico Finance Authority (NMFA), created in 1992, provides local governments with low-cost funds and technical assistance for affordable financing of capital equipment and infrastructure projects at any stage of completion – from pre-planning through construction – through its five main financing sources:

- Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund (DWRLF)
- Primary Care Capital Fund (PCCF)
- Public Project Revolving Fund (PPRF)
- State Buildings and Automation Project Financing
- Water and Wastewater Grant Fund (W/WWGF)

The Water Trust Fund (created in 2001) is also administered by the NMFA, and the NMFA provides staff support to the Water Trust Board that oversees this fund.

NMFA funds capital projects with a useful life of 3 years or longer, including:

- Equipment
- Buildings
- Hospitals
- Water Systems
- Sewer Systems
- Solid Waste Facilities
- Streets
- Airports
- Municipal Facilities
- Parking Facilities

**Contact Information:**

207 Shelby Street  
Santa Fe, NM 87501  
Phone: (505) 984-1454  
Toll Free: (877) ASK-NMFA  
Fax: (505) 984-0002  
[frontdesk@nmfa.net](mailto:frontdesk@nmfa.net)

### **USDA RUS Loans and Grants**

<http://www.epa.gov/owm/mab/smcomm/factsheets/usda/>

The U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers financial and technical assistance programs through its Rural Development department to help rural communities develop safe and affordable sewage treatment and waste disposal systems. Programs that target wastewater treatment are run by the Water Programs Division of the Rural Utilities Service (RUS). The Water and Waste Disposal Loans and Grants Program provides loans, guaranteed loans, and grants for water, sewer, storm water, and solid waste disposal facilities.

Public bodies (e.g., municipalities, counties, Indian Tribes, nonprofit organizations) serving rural areas may be eligible for loans or grants from the water and waste disposal program. The program makes assistance available only to rural areas with 10,000 or fewer people.

### **Water and Waste Disposal Loans and Grants**

Small communities with wastewater treatment or disposal needs can apply for loans and grants to construct, repair or modify waste collection and waste disposal facilities. To receive loans small communities must show that they (1) can't get funds at reasonable rates from commercial sources, (2) have the capacity to borrow and repay loans, and pledge security, and (3) can operate and maintain the affected facilities. Depending on the economic status of the service area, borrowers may receive one of three interest rates: the poverty rate (median household income is below poverty or below 80 percent of the statewide metropolitan median and the project is necessary to meet applicable health or sanitary standards), market rate (where median household income exceeds the statewide non-metropolitan household income), or the intermediate rate.

## **Housing**

### ***New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority***

<http://www.nmmfa.org/>

The MFA, though it is not a state agency, was created by state law with a mandate to provide affordable housing in New Mexico. The MFA is given authority to issue tax-exempt mortgage revenue bonds. Proceeds from bond sales are used to fund below-market interest rate loan programs for single-family homebuyers and for developers of affordable multi-family dwellings. In this way MFA fulfilled its mission, using private dollars only (no state or federal funds), from its 1975 inception to the present.

The state made the MFA responsible for state and federally funded housing programs as well. Besides constituting recognition for a job well done by MFA with its revenue-bond programs, New Mexico made the MFA a "one-stop shop" for housing finance, a model already adopted by most states. The MFA purview now encompasses the tax credits program, emergency shelter grants, homeless initiatives, and Housing and Urban Development's HOME program.

By operating efficiently, the not-for-profit MFA generates surplus revenue, used to create even more programs to make affordable housing a reality in New Mexico. These include programs for down payment assistance and to support other (non-profit) providers of housing and related services.

**The New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority**

344 4th Street SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
(505) 843-6880  
(800) 444-6880 (Toll free in New Mexico)  
Fax: (505) 243-3289  
TTY: (800) 659-8331  
TTY/Voice: (800) 659-1779

**State Construction Industries Division** – information on building codes, alternative materials and methods

<http://www.rld.state.nm.us/cid/>

The New Mexico Construction Industries Division provides for the protection of life and property by adopting and enforcing building codes and standards thereby promoting the general welfare of the people of New Mexico. The Division is responsible for issuing residential and commercial building permits. The Division conducts field inspections for general building, electrical, mechanical and LP Gas code compliance and safety standards. Cities and counties with local building inspection offices must adopt the building codes and standards of the Division as a minimum standard.

The Division is also responsible for:

- Examinations and the issuance of licenses for contractors, and certificates of competence for journeymen.
- Review and approval of residential and commercial building plans for building code and accessibility requirements.
- The conduct of unlicensed contractor investigations.
- Code compliance and other complaints related to violations of the Construction Industries Licensing Act.

Construction Industries Division  
Regulation and Licensing Department  
2550 Cerrillos Road  
Santa Fe, NM 87505  
(505) 476-4700  
Email: [rldcid@state.nm.us](mailto:rldcid@state.nm.us)

## Economic Development

### ***NM Economic Development Department***

<http://www.edd.state.nm.us/>

The New Mexico Economic Development Department raises the standard of living for today's New Mexicans and future generations by fostering a sustained rise in the production of goods and services.

This agency has many diverse projects devoted to a single aim—**better jobs and better lives for New Mexicans**. The Economic Development Department promotes research and development, helps finance job training, revitalizes downtowns, recruits new businesses to our state, and assists our cities and towns to market themselves to attract new business.

Within the New Mexico Economic Development Department, the Community Development Team focuses on helping local communities reach their goals. Regional representatives who live in the region provide direct assistance to communities.

### ***New Mexico Economic Development Department Certified Communities Initiative (CCI)***

<http://www1.edd.state.nm.us/index.php?/community/category/Become%20a%20Certified%20Community/>

The New Mexico Economic Development Department recognizes that in a local community a little change can have a big impact. The intent of the Certified Communities Initiative (CCI) is to help communities make those changes.

Regional representatives work with local officials on the CCI application. Next, they provide the community with a grant and extra support through the co-op marketing program. The Economic Development Department provides publicity to make potential businesses aware of the community and its assets.

Certified Community status comes with up to \$5,000 of contractual funding for two years for special projects, ten bonus points in the coop marketing program, an awards ceremony for the community, press releases and media exposure about the community's new status, and a Certified Community seal to be used in promotions.

Most important, being a Certified Community shows that the community is willing to invest in the infrastructure that successful, growing businesses need.

The Certified Communities brochure can be downloaded from the Economic Development Department web site.

### **Contact:**

Kathy Keith, Community Development

[Kathy.Keith@state.nm.us](mailto:Kathy.Keith@state.nm.us)

(505) 827-0089.



### ***New Mexico Tourism Department Cooperative Advertising Grants***

<http://www.newmexico.org/go/loc/departments/page/dept-coop-advertising.html>

The Cooperative Advertising Grants Program provides matching funds to non-profit tourism related organizations, local and tribal governments in the state promoting New Mexico as a tourist destination. The program reimburses funding recipients 50 percent of the cost for direct advertising including print, broadcast, billboard and online advertising; printing and distribution of promotional brochures; website development; and trade show participation.

For more information contact:

**Mona Medina**

Director

Tel: 505-827-7605

Email: [mona.medina@state.nm.us](mailto:mona.medina@state.nm.us)

### ***Economic Development Administration*** – funds for industrial park infrastructure

<http://www.eda.gov/AboutEDA/Programs.xml>

The Public Works Program empowers distressed communities to revitalize, expand, and upgrade their physical infrastructure to attract new industry, encourage business expansion, diversify local economies, and generate or retain long-term, private sector jobs and investment.

Austin Regional Office

327 Congress Avenue, Suite 200

Austin, Texas 78701-4037

Telephone: (512) 381-8144

### ***HUD Economic Development Initiative***

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/economicdevelopment/programs/edi/index.cfm>

The Economic Development Initiative consists of two components:

- **Special Purpose EDI** (below) - Congressionally earmarked  
Contact: Program Office (202) 708-3773
- **Competitive EDI** - No new grants are being awarded  
Contact: Bill Seedyke (202) 708-3484 extension 4445

WHO MAY APPLY (For Special Purpose EDIs only) :

The entity named by Congress in the FY 2004 Conference Report is the official recipient for the EDI-Special Project grant. This entity sends in the application, and HUD then awards the grant to them.

### **USDA Rural Business Enterprise Program**

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/busp/rbeg.htm>

The Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS) makes grants under the Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG) Program to public bodies, private nonprofit corporations, and Federally-recognized Indian Tribal groups to finance and facilitate development of small and emerging private business enterprises located in any area other than a city or town that has a population of greater than 50,000 inhabitants and the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such a city or town. The public bodies, private nonprofit corporations and federally recognized Indian tribes receive the grant to assist a business. **GRANT FUNDS DO NOT GO DIRECTLY TO THE BUSINESS.**

#### **Who is Eligible?**

Eligibility is limited to public bodies, private nonprofit corporations, and Federally-recognized Indian Tribal groups. Public bodies include incorporated towns and villages, boroughs, townships, counties, States, authorities, districts, Indian Tribes on Federal and State reservations, and other Federally-recognized Indian Tribal groups in rural areas. The small and emerging businesses to be assisted must have less than 50 new employees and less than \$1 million in gross annual revenues.

#### **How May Funds be Used?**

Funds are used for the financing or development of a small and emerging business. Eligible uses are: Technical Assistance (providing assistance for marketing studies, feasibility studies, business plans, training etc.) to small and emerging businesses; purchasing machinery and equipment to lease to a small and emerging business; creating a revolving loan fund (providing partial funding as a loan to a small and emerging business for the purchase of equipment, working capital, or real estate); or construct a building for a business incubator for small and emerging businesses.

Grants cannot be used for:

1. Agricultural Production.
2. Comprehensive areawide planning.
3. Loans by grantees when the rates, terms, and charges for those loans are not reasonable or would be for purposes not eligible under RBEG regulations.
4. Development of a proposal that may result in the transfer of jobs or business activity from one area to another. This provision does not prohibit establishment of a new branch or subsidiary.
5. Development of a proposal which may result in an increase of goods, materials, commodities, services, or facilities in an area when there is not sufficient demand.
6. For programs operated by cable television systems.
7. To fund part of a project dependent on other funding, unless there is a firm commitment of the other funding to ensure completion of the project.

Forms are available from and may be filed in any USDA Rural Development State Office, check your telephone directory under "Federal Government" or call the RBS National Office Specialty Lenders Division, (202) 720-1400.



We recommend discussing the proposed project and process with your local State or area office before completing the application.

***New Mexico Cooperative Extension Service, NMSU, Rural Economic Development Through Tourism (REDTT) Project***

<http://www.redtt.org>

The Rural Economic Development Through Tourism (REDTT) Project began as a three year pilot project in the spring of 1992 to boost rural tourism development in five New Mexico counties as part of New Mexico's Cooperative Extension Service. Because of its success, REDTT has continued to be funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. REDTT now serves 17 counties, including Luna County.

The REDTT project and professional team members are housed in the College of Agriculture and Home Economics at NMSU. Funds have been secured for the project on a year-to-year basis. Members of New Mexico's congressional delegation, as well as the state of New Mexico and other tourism-related organizations, have continued to demonstrate their strong support for the project.

REDTT staff and volunteers work to educate, train, spread information and assist in tourism development. Rural tourism development continues to be a transitional process, moving from the organizational stage to planning and implementation.

The major component of REDTT's outreach efforts is the County Tourism Councils (CTC) in each REDTT county. The CTC for each county is made up of area volunteers, including local interested people, county Extension Service agents, tourism professionals, leaders in business, education, industry, government and the REDTT staff. CTCs assist with the development and implementation of local and regional tourism goals. Each CTC helps design and implement county tourism initiatives. Each council meets monthly.

**Contact:**

Rural Economic Development Through Tourism Project  
Box 30003, MSC 3HRTM, Las Cruces, NM 88003  
Phone: (505) 646-8006 or 646-5994  
FAX: (505) 646-8100

## **Alternative Energy and Alternative On-Site Utility Systems**

***New Mexico Office of the State Engineer***

<http://www.ose.state.nm.us/water-info/conservation/>

**Information about Use of Gray Water**

With drought conditions and increasing concern about the availability of water in general, more homeowners and businesses are considering the use of gray water for landscape irrigation and other purposes. (Gray water includes wastewater from bathtubs, showers, washbasins, or clothes washing machines, but not from the

kitchen or toilets.) Gray water reuse systems can be elaborate or simple. Some homeowners choose to water landscapes directly from the shower or clothes washer through a garden hose or by using buckets. Others prefer to install a dedicated plumbing system that performs subsurface irrigation.

Gray water does contain pathogens and, as such, the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) regulates all uses of gray water (and black water, which includes water from kitchen and toilets) to ensure protection of public health and water quality. Different regulations will apply depending on the volume, measured in gallons per day (gpd), discharged to a single lot:

- Less Than 250 gpd of Gray Water - A permit is not required to apply less than 250 gpd of private residential gray water for a resident's household gardening, composting or landscape irrigation, so long as the gray water is applied in accordance with certain requirements outlined in the *NMED Gray Water Irrigation Guide* which is posted on the NMED web page at [www.nmenv.state.nm.us](http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us).
- Greater Than 250 gpd of Gray Water, But Less Than 2,000 gpd of Total Combined Gray Water and Black Water - A Liquid Waste Permit issued by the NMED Field Operations Division is required if more than 250 gpd of gray water will be applied and the combined volume of gray water and black water discharged to a single lot is less than 2,000 gpd. Permits may be obtained from the nearest NMED field office.
- Greater Than 250 gpd of Gray Water, and More Than 2,000 gpd of Total Combined Gray Water and Black Water - A Discharge Permit issued by the NMED Ground Water Quality Bureau is required if more than 250 gpd of gray water will be applied and the combined volume of gray water and black water discharged is more than 2,000 gpd. Submit a *Notice of Intent to Discharge* to the NMED Ground Water Quality Bureau describing the proposed project. If NMED determines that a Discharge Permit is required, an *Application for Discharge Permit* must be completed and submitted.

The local city or county government may also have gray water requirements that must be followed. In addition, if a large-scale gray water project is being planned, communities should contact the local OSE Water Rights Division to make sure the project does not inappropriately affect the flow of wastewater for water supply recharge.