

NEW MEXICO
MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

The Municipal Reporter

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Evening Light in Questa



New Mexico Municipal League



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Municipal Reporter

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President's Message



As we head into August, I'm looking forward to the League's 66th Annual Conference in Farmington, kicking off on August 29. The city of Farmington, along with Municipal League staff, has been planning the event for months, and I know we're in for a good time. The city has put together a great social program, showcasing the downtown, local museums and theaters, a recently completed river walk, and more. I've even heard rumors of a mechanical bull.

In conjunction with the social programming, Municipal League staff and partners have also developed a full agenda of workshops, presentations, and speaker panels to help inspire and support municipal officials and staff in serving their communities. We'll cover some of the issues that are top of mind for many of us – how to promote civil discourse, address mental health challenges in the workplace, develop solutions for affordable housing, tackle substance abuse and homelessness in our communities, and ensure effective communication during emergency and crisis situations. We've included a preview of the Annual Conference program in this newsletter.

Annual Conference is also an opportunity for us as League members to align on our policy priorities for the 2024 legislative session and beyond. Policy development work for the upcoming year has already begun, through meetings of the League's Policy Committee and Resolutions Committee over the course of the summer. Committee members refined existing resolutions and policy statements and introduced new priorities, and also identified the highest priority issues. For example, we continue to prioritize additional funding for our chronically underfunded emergency medical services, as well as support for local governments to join the statewide public safety radio network. Tax policy committee members had a productive discussion about the League's strategy in the face of likely reintroduction of anti-pyramiding legislation – we must ensure that potentially significant revenue losses are offset by corresponding increases in our local share of state GRT.

I truly appreciate the strong participation in our policy development process. So many of you showed up and brought your own perspectives and expertise to inform our policy process. The more input and participation we have, the stronger and more cohesive our position will be as we approach the upcoming legislative session, and I think we're off to a good start.

Speaking of Annual Conference, League Board members recently heard pitches from three cities – Clovis, Las Cruces, and Ruidoso – to host upcoming conferences. All three cities brought forward thoughtful, detailed hosting plans, and the Board was excited to award the 2024 conference to Clovis, 2025 to Ruidoso, and 2026 to Las Cruces. I want to extend a big thanks to officials and staff of those cities for their great pitches and their willingness to host.

It's been an honor to serve as your League president over the past year and represent municipal interests at the Roundhouse, across the state, and in Washington D.C. As we head into our next election cycle, I feel confident that we're in good hands with our committed and capable President-Elect, and I'm heartened to see dedicated members step forward for consideration for Board and officer positions.

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you later this month in Farmington. I hope you're practicing your mechanical bull riding skills.

Michael A. Miller

UPCOMING EVENTS

For a full list of events, please refer to the Municipal League website

August 29 – September 1
Municipal League Annual Conference
Farmington

September 13-15
NM League of Zoning Officials Annual Meeting
Ruidoso

September 28 – October 1
NM Fire Service Conference
Ruidoso

October 6
NMML Board of Directors Meeting
Santa Fe

October 15 – 20
Clerks Certification Institute
Santa Fe

October 18 -20
Master Municipal Clerks Academy
Santa Fe

66th NMML Annual Conference Preview

66th NMML Annual Conference Preview

We are looking forward to seeing you in Farmington!

Please note that this is a **preliminary agenda** and timings and content are subject to change.

For the most up-to-date information and more details on the conference, please visit the event calendar on our website (www.nmml.org).

Farmington Civic Center ● August 29 - September 1, 2023

TUESDAY, AUGUST 29 th	
Community Project	<i>Sycamore Park Community Center's storage facility and all of the contents inside were damaged in a fire. This service project will assist in building and replacing program games and supplies and recreating decorations. You do not have to be an artist or a builder, this will be a fun project to invigorate a creative side you may not have known you had. All projects will be ready for either cutting, painting, or minor assembly.</i>
Golf Outing at Pinon Hills Golf Course: 11:00 am – 6:00 pm	<i>Join us Tuesday, August 29th at the nationally ranked and newly renovated Piñon Hills Golf Course. Lunch will be served from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm on-site at the Grill on the Hill. After lunch, visit our pro shop or warm up on the driving range - then tee off in the shotgun start, four-person scramble tournament at 1:00 pm. Learn more about the course at pinonhills golf.com.</i>
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 30 th	
Subsection Meetings: 9:00 am – 11:00 am	
Mayors/Councilors/Commissioners/Trustees Caucus	
NM Municipal Judges Association	
NM City Management Association	
The Power of Knowing our Worth: <i>How we view ourselves is vital to establishing a successful career and personal life. If the image of ourselves is off, the output in our lives can also be off. Establishing a positive self-image is one of the most important investments you can make in your future. Often, a shift in perspective may be the solution and breakthrough you've been waiting for. Join this session to learn strategies to limit self-doubt, build confidence, and embrace a refreshed perspective.</i>	
NMCFOA and NMGFOA Joint Meeting	
<i>Overview of new Finance Reporting Module and changes to Capital Outlay Funding. Review of Legislative changes to Inspection of Public Records Act and Next Steps</i>	
NM Association of Chiefs of Police	
NM Environmental Quality Association	
NM Municipal Librarians Association	
Lunch with Exhibitors: 11:15 am – 12:30 pm	
Welcome: 12:30 – 1:00 pm	
Opening General Session: 1:00 – 2:30pm	
Matt Lehrman, From Conflict to Conversation	
<i>Must disagreement be disagreeable? Amidst unprecedented disruption and uncertainty, there's never been a more necessary time for community leaders to learn how to tackle complex and sensitive issues in ways that leave people feeling heard, respected, and empowered.</i>	
Concurrent Workshops: 3:00 – 4:15 pm	
Workshop 1: Green Hydrogen: An Investment in the Energy Transition	
<i>In 2022, Questa received a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy to explore the feasibility of developing a green hydrogen generating facility at the former Chevron mine. In this panel, local leaders and project stakeholders will discuss the project's potential for Questa and the surrounding area, and considerations for other communities interested in large-scale alternative energy projects.</i>	
Workshop 2: Leadership Essentials with Leadership NM	
<i>Through its Local Government Leadership Program, Leadership New Mexico has trained local elected officials and staff from across the state, providing a unique educational experience for civic leaders. In this workshop, Leadership NM will share a taste of its top leadership topics for local leaders.</i>	
Workshop 3: Let's Talk - Civility in Your World	
<i>Continue the discussion on civility and community engagement. Keynote speaker Matt Lehrman will lead an interactive, pragmatic discussion with attendees. Is civility a challenge in your community? How can you foster productive, courageous community conversations?</i>	

66th NMML Annual Conference Preview

"Illuminated Pathways" Welcome Reception: 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Gather with us to walk the path of discovery and possibilities at the Farmington Museum & Visitor Center. From 6-9pm, we will enjoy freshly green chile roasted onsite, homemade tortillas, chicken flautas and more in a beautiful setting along the Animas River. Watch the fire dancers, listen to Joe Villarreal and connect with statewide friends and colleagues, as we make a commitment to build brighter future for our communities!

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31ST

Fun Run/Walk: 6:45 – 7:45 am

Race into the day on Wednesday, August 30th by entering our 5K fun run/walk along the beautiful banks of the Animas River. The race will begin at 6:30 am and will be followed by breakfast onsite from Juniper Cafe. Start and finish line is at the small pavilion (next to the splash pad) in Berg Park near San Juan Blvd and 400 Scott Ave.

Concurrent Workshops: 9:00 – 10:00 am

Workshop 4: Creating a Healthy Work Environment: Mental Health in Public Service

As an Albuquerque-based police and public safety psychologist, Dr. Troy Rodgers regularly deals with high-stress work environments. In this workshop, he'll discuss strategies and tools to create supportive work environments that prioritize and enhance employees' mental wellbeing. Learn about common stressors and challenges that impact mental health and explore strategies to promote wellbeing, work-life balance, and stress management.

Workshop 5: You've got to be kidding me! (Human Resources stories – description TBA)

Workshop 6: The Farmington Story: Economic Growth & Diversification of a Community

Farmington leaders will share their story of how the City of Farmington, Visit Farmington, and other organizations engaged with residents to build a successful community brand that led to identifying new economic diversification opportunities and ultimately defined the Outdoor Recreation Industry Imitative (ORII). Attendees will learn about the establishment of the Community Transformation and Economic Diversification Fund (CTED Fund) and how it supports ORII and related projects; and how Visit Farmington and the City's efforts were the foundation for the creation of the statewide group EndeavOR.

Concurrent Workshops: 10:30 – 11:30 am

Workshop 7: Addressing the Affordable Housing Crisis

Many New Mexico communities face a lack of affordable housing, a critical component of local economic development and community well-being. The New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority will discuss the challenges impacting housing affordability in the state and share practical strategies and tools for how local governments can put themselves in a position to address housing affordability.

Workshop 8: Community Solutions to Substance Abuse

Learn about the City of Farmington's innovative approach to addressing the complex interplay between substance abuse, mental health challenges, and homelessness. The city has launched an alternative response unit and a joint intervention program, with the goal of improving outcomes, reducing the strain on law enforcement, and focusing on preventative interventions through a community-based, holistic model.

Workshop 9: Communicating Through a Crisis: A Panel Discussion

Three New Mexico mayors will share their own experiences of dealing with unexpected crisis situations. Panelists will discuss lessons learned on crisis messaging, media relations, and public engagement and share tips on how local leaders can be prepared to communicate during times of crisis.

Closing General Session 11:45 am – 12:45 pm - TBA

Lunch Honoring Past Presidents 12:45 – 2:00 pm

"Footloose in Farmington" Dinner/Dance Pop 5:00 – 10:00 pm

Get the night started from 5-7pm, as we show you how to be Footloose in Farmington with three unique locations, all within easy walking distance of one another: Locke Street Eats, the Museum of Navajo Art & Culture and the Totah Theater. Enjoy the outdoor vibe at Locke Street Eats with corn hole, life-size Jenga, a mechanical bull and other games, along with a DJ to get the evening going. The Museum of Navajo Art & Culture will allow you to get to know our cultured side, as it features a truly significant collection of Navajo rugs and textiles from the early 1900s to today. The Totah Theater will entertain you with the 3 Redneck Tenors – featuring their musical comedy of classically trained veteran artists who provide you with "down home laughs with big city music!"

At 7pm, all will converge at Locke Street Eats for a memorable night under the stars of grilled steaks, freshly roasted corn, enchiladas, live music by After Midnight and an elaborate s'mores bar roasted over a fire pit. The only thing you need to bring is your adventurous spirit, dancing shoes and appetite!

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1ST

Closing Breakfast 8:00 – 10:00 am

Taking the Lead: How City Officials Can Promote Civility

By Matt Lehrman, Co-Founder and Managing Director, Social Prosperity Partners

Civility in local government is similar to the guardrails on a highway — providing structure by which municipal leaders and the public can navigate around each other. Securing the travel lanes provides mutual safety for people heading in all directions.

When civility breaks down, however, people and perspectives collide — resulting in misunderstandings and disagreements that can harm relationships and fracture a community's sense of togetherness.

Guardrails can't provide complete protection from conflicts, but they are the fundamental structures of cooperation and coexistence.

In the first half of this article, I'm going to make the strategic, and perhaps idealistic, case for celebrating disagreement. If you've already been on the receiving end of anger and vitriol, I'll understand if you skip to the second half, which offers thoughts on how to stand strong against incivility.

Taking the lead

Every city official owns the responsibility for the infrastructure of civility in their municipality. Whatever your personal agenda or philosophy, you are — by nature of your position — undeniably responsible for ensuring access, information, and respect for all, including for those with whom you disagree.

Creating an environment that is open, fair, and considerate to everyone is crucial. This means basing your decisions on factual information, being transparent in your actions and decision-making processes, and being accountable for promoting a sense of pride and togetherness throughout your community.

By prioritizing civility, you set a positive example and build trust and confidence — not just in local government, but in your community's essential quality of togetherness. A civil local government is not just nice to have but a must-have. It is the foundation upon which a healthy and functioning democracy is built.

Welcoming disagreements

Disagreement is not a sign of dysfunction, but rather a prerequisite for effective decision-making in a free society. The ideal of democracy is that it enables people with assorted knowledge, values, and lived experiences to come together to recognize and solve community problems. The civic leadership for which you're responsible cannot be achieved without the presence of diverse and even passionate perspectives and viewpoints.

Disagreement also helps to expose underlying assumptions and biases. When individuals with different perspectives come together, they are often forced to articulate and defend their assumptions and values — a process that reveals hidden

biases and assumptions. By engaging with dissenting viewpoints, municipal leaders can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the problem they are trying to



solve. Diverse perspectives can help to identify issues that may have been overlooked or underappreciated. In this way, disagreement can be a catalyst for creativity and innovation.

When citizens are encouraged to express their views and engage in constructive dialogue, they are more likely to hold their leaders accountable for their decisions. Can you make yourself comfortable with feedback and criticism? By engaging with — rather than avoiding or repelling — diverse perspectives, even dissent, you have the potential to create a culture of accountability that ensures decision-making is truly transparent and responsive.

As a civic leader, when you say “community,” it's especially important for people to remember that you are responsible to serve not a specific constituency but the entire population of your city. While it may be tempting to focus on the interests of your most vocal supporters or a community's loudest voices, doing so can lead to short-term thinking and neglect of the long-term interests of the broader community.

Disagreement builds trust and strengthens relationships. When individuals feel that their opinions are valued and respected, they are more likely to be invested in that decision-making process. By creating forums for meaningful dialogue, municipal leaders demonstrate their commitment to the community and build relationships of trust and mutual respect. In this way, disagreement can be a powerful force for social cohesion and community building.

While disagreement can be challenging and uncomfortable, leaders must foster an environment that encourages open and honest communication. This may require the development of formal mechanisms for soliciting feedback and dissent, such as public forums or advisory committees. Leaders must also be prepared to model constructive dialogue and demonstrate a commitment to the values of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity.

Standing strong against incivility

The American ideal of government is rooted in the belief that reasonable people can work together to find solutions to shared problems. Compromise is not a weakness, and ample time and space exist to make community decisions. While not everyone will always agree on the final outcome,



the process must be fair and thorough — ensuring that everyone feels heard. This is encapsulated in the American motto, *e pluribus unum*: “Out of many, one.”

Unfortunately, this ideal is being threatened by the prevalence of anger and outrage in American media, where clicks, shares, and time spent engaging translate into profit. This business model has created a market for incivility and negativity that pervades our society, leading to issues such as polarization and divisiveness. It's a conundrum.

To counteract this, local governments must actively practice respectful communication and behavior that promotes collaboration, compromise, and constructive dialogue. Incivility, which demonstrates a lack of respect and consideration for others, creates a self-centered attitude that can leave others feeling hurt, disrespected, and excluded. It can extend beyond individual interactions to affect relationships, productivity, and broader societal issues community-wide. Therefore, it's essential to strive for an environment that encourages civility and respectful engagement, helping to restore the American ideal of government.

If you want to stand against incivility, you need to recognize and call it out when you see it, in particular:

- **Obstinace** — stubborn adherence to one's own opinion despite reason or persuasion.
- **Demagoguery** — emotional and prejudicial appeals to sway public opinion, rather than engaging in rational argument.
- **Dogmatism** — the inflexible adherence to a particular set of principles, beliefs, or ideology, without considering alternative viewpoints or evidence.

Changing these behaviors is not something that can be achieved overnight. If you're looking for a quick fix, I'm sorry to disappoint, but there is no magic phrase or verbal jiu-jitsu tactic that can instantly reverse an instance of incivility during a council meeting.

The following is the civility that all local leaders need to get good at:

Energize obstinance. Find shared goals and values that underlie the debate. By identifying common ground, you can frame the conversation in a way that encourages compromise

and collaboration. Bring in outside experts, facilitators, or neutral third parties to provide fresh perspectives and objective feedback.

Counter demagoguery. Focus on presenting the facts and evidence that support the proposed course of action. By presenting data and statistics in a clear and compelling way, you can help to move the conversation away from emotional appeals and toward rational and fact-based decision-making. Engaging in active listening and making space for the consideration of alternative solutions is vital.

Overcome dogmatism. Frame the debate in terms of outcomes rather than ideology. By focusing on the practical implications of different policy choices, you shift the conversation away from entrenched beliefs and toward pragmatic solutions. Building alliances and coalitions across ideological lines can also be an effective way to seek out common ground and work together toward shared goals.

You have a crucial responsibility to govern your community in a fair, equitable, and just manner. This requires standing strong against incivility and disrespect, even when it's being thrown at you. By modeling respectful behavior and promoting constructive dialogue, you set the standard for your community.

Connecting, respecting and listening

As a civic leader, you are the guardian of a thriving community, responsible for making decisions that impact the lives of your residents. Facing incivility and negativity during council meetings and community events can be disheartening, but giving up is not an option when it comes to civic leadership.

Remember that your mission is to create a positive and inclusive environment for all. By prioritizing respect and collaboration, you set an example for others to follow, creating a ripple effect that can spread throughout the community. Keep your focus on how people in your community deserve to feel about civic engagement — connected, respected, and heard — and find the motivation to push through challenging situations and work toward constructive solutions.

Local leaders hold the power to shape decisions that impact people's daily lives. Making those decisions with integrity, fairness, and a commitment to the greater good is crucial. By bringing people together, bridging divides, and creating a better future for your community, you have a responsibility worth fighting for.

Stay strong, stay committed, and keep striving toward creating a more positive and inclusive community.

Matt Lehrman will deliver the opening keynote “From Conflict to Conversation” at the New Mexico Municipal League’s Annual Conference on August 30, 2023. A version of this article originally appeared in Minnesota Cities magazine.

Around the State

New Mexico Tourism Department Partners with Local Communities to Support Fairs, Festivals, and Events in FY24

The New Mexico Tourism Department (NMTD) is boosting its investment in New Mexico's fairs, festivals and events in fiscal year 2024 after a successful inaugural year of the **Tourism Event Growth and Sustainability Program**.

NMTD awarded a total of \$460,692 in grant funding for 35 tourism-related events scheduled over the next 12 months across New Mexico. In total, NMTD will be supporting 17 New Mexico communities through the program, including two tribal communities. In the program's inaugural year in FY23, NMTD awarded \$177,000 in grant funding to 16 tourism-related events.

NMTD first implemented the program in FY23 to provide more specialized support for tourism-related events. **The program provides support in the form of sponsorship, cooperative advertising, and an event accelerator.**

For FY24, NMTD is supporting 14 events through sponsorship, nine events through cooperative marketing support and 11 events through the event accelerator. NMTD supported six events through sponsorship, five events through cooperative marketing support and five events through the event accelerator in FY23.

Through the event accelerator, participants will work with a team of experts that will provide technical support intended to establish best practices and scale operations in a sustainable manner. Technical support will include an online discoverability audit and strategic planning for optimizing digital presence and online ticketing.

The support provided through the event accelerator is intended to help take participating events to greater heights by enhancing capacity and driving more visitation. Four out of the five event accelerator participants from last year were able to "graduate" to the cooperative marketing tier of the program for FY24.

Through the cooperative marketing support option, recipients participate in a 2:1 cost sharing model on behalf of NMTD that provides grants up to \$10,000 for partners. Participants in the event accelerator may receive up to \$5,000 for implementation of technical support and strategic planning. The event sponsorship component of the program provides up to \$50,000 in direct sponsorship support for participants.

For more information about the Tourism Event Growth and Sustainability program, visit www.NewMexico.org/industry.



Below is a complete list of program participants for FY24:

Event Accelerator			
8750' Festival	Red River	Aug. 5-6, 2023	\$5,000
Aspencade Music & Arts Festival	Red River	Aug. 17-18, 2023	\$5,000
Chama Valley Art Festival and Studio Tour	Chama	Sept. 2-3, 2023	\$5,000
Farm House Ale Event/Bernalillo Blues Festival	Bernalillo	June 2024	\$5,000
Great American Duck Race	Deming	Aug. 24-27, 2023	\$5,000
Nakotah LaRance Youth Hoop Dance Championship	Santa Fe	Aug. 5-6, 2023	\$5,000
Storytelling Festival	Taos	Oct. 13-14, 2023	\$5,000
Tommy Knocker 10	Santa Clara Pueblo	April 6, 2024	\$5,000
Tour de Acoma	Acoma Pueblo	Sept. 10, 2023	\$5,000
Traditional Spanish Market	Santa Fe	July 29-30, 2023	\$5,000
Wagon Mound Bean Day	Wagon Mound	Sept. 1-4, 2023	\$5,000

Cooperative Marketing Support			
Bernalillo Indian Arts Festival	Bernalillo	May 5-6, 2024	\$7,000
Clovis Music Festival	Clovis	April 11-13, 2024	\$10,000
Day of the Tread	Albuquerque	Oct. 28-29, 2023	\$5,000
Fiesta Latina	Silver City	June 2024	\$5,000
Indigenous Ways Festival	Santa Fe	Aug. 18, 2023 May 3, 2024 June 7, 2024	\$8,510
Los Alamos Science Fest	Los Alamos	July 7-18, 2023 July 2024	\$4,510
Mariachi Spectacular de Albuquerque	Albuquerque	July 12-15, 2023 July 2024	\$10,000
Smokin' on the Plaza	Lovington	June 14-15, 2024	\$5,682
UFO Festival	Roswell	June 28-30, 2024	\$10,000

Sponsorship			
2024 Native Treasures Art Market	Santa Fe	May 24-26, 2024	\$5,000
Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta	Albuquerque	Oct. 7-15, 2023	\$50,000
Currents New Media Festival	Santa Fe	June 14-23, 2023	\$10,000
Festival Flamenco Albuquerque	Albuquerque	June-July 2024	\$30,000
Gathering of Nations Powwow	Albuquerque	April 25-27, 2024	\$50,000
International Folk Art Market	Santa Fe	July 6-9, 2023 July 11-14, 2024	\$20,000
Las Cruces International Film Festival	Las Cruces	March 3-7, 2024	\$15,000
New Mexico Wine Festival	Albuquerque & Las Cruces	May 25-27, 2024	\$20,000
Santa Fe Indian Market	Santa Fe	Aug. 19-20, 2023	\$50,000
Santa Fe International Film Festival	Santa Fe	Oct. 18-22, 2023	\$15,000
Santa Fe Wine & Chile Festival	Santa Fe	Sept. 27 – Oct. 1, 2023	\$10,000
The Burning of Zozobra	Santa Fe	Sept. 1, 2023 Aug. 30, 2024	\$50,000
The PASEO	Taos	Sept. 15-16, 2023	\$10,000
Up & Over 10K Trail Run Weekend	Taos Ski Valley	Aug. 5-6, 2023	\$5,000

New Mexico Broadband Expansion Boosted by \$675 Million Federal Allocation

Expanding broadband access continues to be a priority policy goal, both within New Mexico and nationwide. Recently, several important developments have paved the way for expansion of broadband: the FCC recently released an updated version of their National Broadband Map and the Biden-Harris administration announced how \$42.5 billion in funding from the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program will be allocated. **New Mexico's BEAD allocation totals just over \$675 million. The funding is expected to be distributed to subgrantees, including local and tribal governments, educational institutions, and healthcare facilities.**

The BEAD program will operate differently than the recent wave of federal funding for broadband, which was focused on planning grants and specific projects (to see previous awards and allocations for the state, check out the [Internet For All Dashboard](#))¹. Eligible entities (states, D.C., and territories) received their formal notice of BEAD allocation on June 30, 2023, and have 180 days to submit their initial proposals to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). Once the initial proposal has been submitted, eligible entities will be able to access 20 percent of their allocated funds. Following the initial proposal approval, entities will have 365 days to submit their final proposal, and then the other 80 percent of funds will become available. Eligible entities will have a four-year implementation window to use these funds (beginning after initial proposals are submitted).

\$675 Million

*New Mexico's allocation of federal
BEAD funding for broadband
expansion*

The BEAD program requires that states **prioritize unserved (under 25/3 Mbps), then underserved (100/20 Mbps) locations and community anchor institutions without 1/1 Gbps service**. While New Mexico's program details have yet to be published, Governor Lujan Grisham and Director Kelly Schlegel of the Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) have both stressed the need to modernize New Mexico's current broadband infrastructure and lay new fiber, as estimates show that 23 percent of New Mexico households cannot access reliable internet.

What role can local governments play?

- The Office of Broadband Access and Expansion team is collecting information to help shape the state's broadband infrastructure expansion and digital equity planning efforts. OBAE has published six inventory surveys, several of which local governments are highly encouraged to fill out. Please visit [Connect New Mexico's Website](#)² for more information.
- States are required to conduct and document coordination with local governments and to make the plans available for public comment. *New Mexico has yet to publish its plans, but NTIA is maintaining a list [here](#).*³
- States are required to establish a challenge process for an area's eligibility determination (unserved, underserved, etc.) so that communities are not excluded from this funding. The eligibility determinations have been made using the most recent [FCC Broadband Map](#)⁴, which is a living document and will be adjusted and updated. Local voices are encouraged to challenge and engage in this process – the FCC Broadband Map uses data as reported by Internet Service Providers, but also heavily relies on communities and individuals to challenge or request corrections.
- The BEAD program will not distribute money directly to local governments, but NTIA maintains a [Local Government Resources Dashboard](#)⁵ that tracks grant opportunities, technical assistance documents, digital inclusion resources, and other NTIA initiatives.



1 <https://www.internetforall.gov/funding-recipients>

2 <https://connect.nm.gov/tell-us.html>

3 <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/funding-programs/broadband-equity-access-and-deployment-bead-program>

4 <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home>

5 <https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/local-government-resources>

Water Project Fund Application Cycle Opens for 2024 with \$135 million in Available Funding

The New Mexico Finance Authority has published the 2024 Water Project Fund application cycle. The Water Trust Board estimates **approximately \$135 million for this cycle's available funding**, although there will be an updated revenue estimate released in August.

The Water Project Fund is used to fund a variety of water projects for eligible entities, including municipalities, recommended by the Water Trust Board and authorized by the Legislature. Water Trust Board awards are a combination of grants and loans, based upon the financial capacity of the applicants.



There are **five project types eligible for consideration of financial assistance**: water conservation or recycling, treatment, or water reuse projects; flood prevention projects; Endangered Species Act (ESA) collaborative projects; water storage, conveyance, or delivery projects; and watershed restoration and management projects.

The full, detailed application timeline and the 2024 Notice of Intent Application is available at nmfinance.com.

Key dates:

- **August 17**: Application Opens
- **September 15**: Application Closes
- **October 3-4**: WTB Meeting with Project Presentations
- **October 24**: WTB Meeting – Approval of projects recommended for Legislative Authorization
- **December 11**: Readiness Application Opens
- **January 25**: Readiness Application Closes
- **April 23**: WTB Meeting – Final funding recommendations to NMFA Board of Directors
- **May 23**: NMFA Board Meeting: Final Approval of WTB Awards Financial Packages

Questions about applying for Water Trust Board funding?

The Municipal League provides grant-related support for member municipalities.
Contact Alison Nichols (anichols@nmml.org)

Grant Corner

Fire Protection Grant Funds Available for Fiscal Year 2024

The Fire Protection Grant Cycle for FY24 will close on August 31, 2023

The Fire Protection Grant Council offers two types of grants:

- **Individual Department Grant** with or without a request for stipends for volunteer members. *If you are an individual department under the jurisdiction of a county administration, you will not be eligible to apply for a stipend award.*
- **County-Wide Project Grant** with or without a request for stipends for volunteer members.

All fire departments currently certified and funded by the New Mexico State Fire Marshal's Office are eligible to apply for an Individual Department Grant. The Department must have a unique FDID.

Eligible uses of grant funds:

Up to \$400,000 for the following projects:

- Facility construction
- Major facility improvements or repairs
- Land acquisition
- Training facilities

Up to \$300,000 for the following projects:

- Apparatus and NFPA equipment
- A single large infrastructure project (including water supply systems and communications infrastructure projects)
- SCBA and/or air support systems such as air compressors, cascade systems and mobile fill systems



Up to \$150,000 for the following projects or other critical needs:

- PPE, e.g. structural, wildland, extractors, Haz-mat and ballistic protection
- Communications, e.g. mobile radios, handheld radios and base stations

In addition to the projects applied for, up to \$25,000 may be requested by municipal departments with a volunteer staff or a county-wide request may be made for the purpose of providing stipends, supplementing recruitment and retention programs or educational programs for volunteer firefighters.

For the application and more information, visit:

<https://www.nmdhsem.org/state-firemarshal/fire-grant-council/#grant>

Community Spotlight

Sierra Blanca Regional Airport Improvements in Full-Swing

Nestled in southeastern New Mexico, the Sierra Blanca Regional Airport is a gateway to the Village of Ruidoso and Lincoln County communities. Given the thriving tourism in the region, the airport accommodates a steady influx of aircraft and jet activity each year, leading to the gradual deterioration of its airfield pavements.

To revitalize the pavement, the airport is currently undergoing a simultaneous reconstruction of Runway 12/30 and rehabilitation of Taxiway B. The combined project is anticipated to cost \$12 million, with \$8 million allotted for the runway and \$4 million for the taxiway. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airport Improvement Program typically allocates federal grants for just one project having a budgeted amount available with a state and local match. However, the recent passing of House Bill 2 - General Appropriation Act, allotted an additional \$55 million to enhance the regional airports in New Mexico.

Notably, Sierra Blanca Regional Airport was the first airport to receive a fully-funded grant from the New Mexico Department of Transportation Aviation Division for the Taxiway B rehabilitation project, which allowed for both projects to be constructed simultaneously, creating a cost savings in construction and airport closure time. By leveraging federal and state grants, the Village's financial contributions were minimized, being solely applied to the runway rehabilitation.

Given the magnitude of this project, the airport scheduled an expedited 21-day closure, carefully timed between Memorial Day and Independence Day, to minimize disruptions to operations. This deadline was achieved through creative scheduling, the utilization of recycled materials during construction, and accelerated paving efforts carried out by multiple crews from Mesa Verde Enterprises, Inc. The project design and construction



operations are being managed by Jacquie Martinez, C.M., Senior Airport Project Manager at Armstrong Consultants in coordination with the Village of Ruidoso Fire Chief, Joe Kasuboski and Airport Manager, Lee Baker.

Alongside the pavement upgrades, the project also involves the installation of new airfield lighting systems. Once construction is complete, the improved pavement conditions and lighting upgrades will enhance safety across the airfield for pilots and passengers alike. The Village of Ruidoso's commitment to these improvement projects serves as an investment in the future economic development of the community.



New Mexico Self Insurers' Fund Update

New Fiscal Year Brings Positive Changes in Renewal Process, Opportunities for Knowledge Sharing

By Linda Calhoun, Mayor of Red River, NMSIF Board Chair



A new fiscal year is upon us, which means the New Mexico Self-Insurers' Fund has begun its preparations for what comes next. Educational opportunities are around the corner, legislative initiatives are front-of-mind, and your team continues its commitment to local government growth.

In May, **the NMSIF Board had the chance to contribute its knowledge directly to public entity insurance experts at the annual national Trustees Conference**, where long-term, cutting-edge initiatives from around the country are shared. A couple of group discussions that stood out this year included equity and rate development and – never far from my mind – modernization of law enforcement for managing high-risk public safety clients. We also participated in breakout sessions that gave us the opportunity to highlight New Mexico success stories.

Back home, we are consistently looking for ways to make connections across the industry. Trustee White recently spearheaded **expansion of our ride-along program to include the entire public safety community**. Now that our program includes approval for – and coverage of – ride-alongs with firefighters, EMTs, and others, community members will have more access and exposure to their local law enforcement and public safety, which we believe will build trust and generate interest in professions critical to a safe, healthy, and vibrant society.

Of course, **we've also navigated (yet another) renewal period**. That renewal was characterized by a concerted push by brokers, underwriting, and risk management teams to reverse problematic design trends in a rapidly-changing marketplace. For example, the last half decade included policies providing for a co-insurance structure on hail claims where the program at-large owned 3% of losses in excess of retention. Those were significant underwriting challenges for the Board to weather.

Thankfully, we place more coverage with the National League of Cities each year, and NLC proposed, for the first time since 2018, a deductible structure for hail losses. Now, instead of paying three percent of whatever catastrophic loss might visit our program, we're capped at \$250,000 per event. In short: that's a really big win, and we are thankful that **our partners at NLC worked with our coverage team to provide an additional layer of certainty** to your property program.

In the liability program, we've seen positive outcomes as a result of making sure we do not hold onto claims where inappropriate. Over the last year, **we've adjusted and closed large claims that leave a risk portfolio more representative of your risks** and deserving of the increased care and attention you can expect from technical staff. We are proud of the customer service culture that we've built for members.

I hope to see you all at our annual conference in Farmington. Until then, stay cool and be safe!

New Mexico Self Insurers' Fund Update

Public Safety Resources and Reminders from the New Mexico Self-Insurers' Fund

There were **several statutory changes related to body-worn cameras** from the 2023 legislative session.

- Senate Bill 368 made exceptions to requirements for officers to wear body cameras, and modified language presuming bad faith if an officer fails to comply with body camera requirements (changing presumption language from "shall" to "may")
- Refer to the fiscal impact report for SB368 for a summary of the bill

The **Self-Insurers' Fund will reimburse members' purchases of body-worn cameras.**

- Reimbursement is for hardware only (not software/IT)
- To request reimbursement, please email copies of your department's body camera policy, an invoice, and a purchase order to fdunaway@nmml.org
- *If you would like a copy of the NMSIF resolution on body camera reimbursement, please contact us*

Mental health support is available at no cost to all police, fire, EMS, and dispatch (for NMSIF members).

- Treatment is confidential and there are no session limits
- Treatment is also available at no cost to immediate family members
- Support is provided through the [Public Safety Psychology Group](#) in Albuquerque (505-888-5499)

For more information on these and other resources available to public safety employees of Fund members, please contact Clinton Nicley, Risk Services Director at cnicley@nmsif.org

From the Archives: Albuquerque Evening Herald, January 14, 1920

Municipal League May Meet February 25: New Mexico Organization to Consider Important Legislation

City Manager Hebenstreit, secretary, has sent out a letter to members of the New Mexico Municipal League asking if it is agreeable that a meeting of the league be called in Albuquerque on February 25. Any objections to the date are asked to be made known to him by January 22.

The purpose of the meeting of the league will be to adopt a set of bylaws, elect officers and discuss municipal legislation, consider expanding the organization and creating another department whose function will relate strictly to state and county government.

The first meeting of the Municipal League of New Mexico was held in Albuquerque a year ago last December. Charles F. Wade of Albuquerque was elected president, but since his death his place has been taken by F. O. Blood of Las Vegas, who was vice president.

It is expected that the coming session of the league will be one of the most important conferences of municipal officers ever held in the city. Many important matters of legislation as affecting cities will be considered. The program for the meeting has not yet been completed.



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