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Just about a year ago, I wrote one of my first columns, where I described the adventure of accompanying Bill Fulginiti, Regina Romero, and Ed Zendel on a road trip through the southern part of the state. As you may already know, the NM Municipal League holds district meetings soon after the end of each legislative session, giving staff the opportunity to give a hot-off-the-presses update on what happened at the Roundhouse of relevance to our communities. I was not able to join them on the sweep through the northern part of the state last year, so I hoped that I would be able to this year. Unfortunately, life got in the way, and I was only able to attend my own district meeting, held this year in beautiful Red River.

If you were unable to attend a meeting in your district, I highly encourage you to do so in the future. They are held close to your home turf, and you get the inside scoop on the most recent legislative session from Bill and Regina, and the most recent self-insurance status from Ed, including any dividends your municipality may (or may not) get due to your most recent insurance liabilities. Unfortunately, Los Alamos seems to be a magnet for lawsuits recently, and Ed, a close friend of mine for many years, seemed to take dark pleasure in looking in my direction when the list of towns and cities that do get a dividend does not include my own. We will do better next year, Ed, I promise!

Because the NMML districts are organized geographically, you get to interact with your local neighbors at their meetings. I got to see my colleagues not only in Red River but also in the surrounding communities across Northern NM, from bustling towns like Taos to up-and-coming Questa. One of my interests this year is promoting an accurate 2020 Census, and Northern New Mexico has historically had one of the poorest records in the whole United States. Every person who is not counted in the Census results in thousands of dollars lost in federal funding for that person's community, so it's a big deal. Town of Taos Manager Rick Bellis, and I had a great discussion about the difficulties of getting accurate addressing in a rural community, and their beginning efforts to work with the Census Bureau. This had nothing to do with the NM Municipal League business, but such off-topic but interesting discussions come up all the time when you attend these meetings.

Mayor Calhoun and Red River Town Councilors were great hosts, and I was offered several opportunities to come back and learn a little fly-fishing the next time I visit. Discussions about rural addressing, workman's compensation insurance, legislative priorities, and fly-fishing, and a beautiful drive through the Enchanted Circle. Who could ask for a more satisfying day?

Regards,
City of Sunland Park

Sunland Park Celebrates International Women’s Day 2019 and we want to recognize and thank ALL the great women who work hard for you in Sunland Park. Pictured below are some of the women who make-up our team, from our City Manager, Department Heads, City Council, and not pictured below, Municipal Judge Lizette Salinas. Thank you for all you do and Congratulations on a job well done!

Municipal clerks will be receiving an email within the next few weeks with a roster of records in our database that are linked to their municipality.

The NMML directory on-line has been updated, please review your Municipal listing. Send your changes to jportillo@nmml.org.
Congratulations to our Eunice Police Department on being recognized for their participation in the Lea County DWI program. Eunice has one of the lowest rates of DWI arrest in our area.

Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway is proud to announce that the Carlsbad Municipal Transit System has received the State of New Mexico 5311 Agency of the Year Award from the New Mexico Department of Transportation in recognition of their outstanding performance. The award was presented on April 1 at the 2019 New Mexico Transit Road-ex Conference and Expo.

The City of Carlsbad’s transit fleet consists of 20 buses and 25 employees.

“The extraordinary job the transit system has done has set an example for the rest of the state,” Janway said. “We are proud to see our employees get the recognition they deserve.”

The award for 5311 Agency of the Year Award was given to Carlsbad Municipal Transit for the successful completion of the new Transit Garage Facility, the City’s commitment to the public transportation needs of the community, and the outstanding performance and competent management of the agencies multiple programs. This award is in accordance with the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311, which ensures supplemental funding for public transit service in non-urbanized areas.

“Our transit system employees perform exemplary work every day, and we are extremely honored to receive this award” said Carlsbad Transit Manager Josh Moore.

The Carlsbad Municipal Transit System is responsible for the provision of public transit services within the City of Carlsbad limits, as well as portions of Eddy County adjacent to the city. The transit system provides Demand Response (public dial-a-ride door to door service), Fixed Route Service, and ADA Complementary Paratransit Service. More information can be found here.

The newest book is now available. Free for paid membership or $7.00 for non members. :) For more information call 505 334-7136. You can also order by mail: SJC Historical Society P.O. Box 1252, Aztec NM 87410. Include $2.00 for shipping. The San Juan County Historical Society offices are located in Aztec on North Main Street, next door to the Aztec Museum. We are usually open on Friday from 2 to 4 PM - Saturday from 10 to Noon and on Wednesday from 10 to Noon. We are an all volunteer outfit, so the best bet is to call us at 334-7136 before making a trip to Aztec.
Lawyers have a language all their own. Lawyers routinely employ words and phrases from a long-forgotten language, for example: de novo, ex parte and res judicata. While words from Latin are subject to translation (See: Google translate); “from the new”, “from one party”, and “a matter judged” respectively, City Attorney-speak is a language all its own. City Attorney-speak can be a complicated language and the translation can be difficult because City Attorney-speak includes both the spoken word and non-verbal communication as well. City Attorney-speak occurs when you, as an elected official or employee of a municipality try to have a conversation with your municipal attorney. For readability considerations, I may refer to city attorneys using the “Royal we, or us.” Let’s start with some basic vocabulary and then move on to more sophisticated non-verbal communication.

It Depends:
If I were to guess, I would say that the most popular word or phrase in the city attorney lexicon is “it depends”. “It depends” is often used as a mechanism for delay or to provide the attorney with a moment of contemplation such as: “Do you think we have a problem here?” “It depends”. When “it depends” is used independently without further explanation, it is a clear indication that the attorney needs to contemplate the question further. If the attorney immediately follows up with an explanation of the dependent facts or circumstances, there is a good chance that the attorney will be trying to give a more complete answer to the question. “Do I really have only 15 days to respond to this IPRA request?” “It depends. . . . it depends on whether the IPRA request was an oral or written request.”

This is a gray area:
Usually used in an effort to buy more time. This is another one of my favorites. In law school, attorneys in training learn a hard lesson very early. Through the use of the Socratic method and the dreaded “hypothetical”, law students learn that every outcome in the law might be different if the facts and circumstances giving rise to the dispute are different. I have said this a thousand times, “if you change one fact, you might change the outcome.” These gray areas are everywhere in the law. In fact, grey areas outnumber black and white areas by an order of magnitude. In short, there is very little in the law that is black and white.

“It’s Black Letter Law:”
Means I’m sure I am right. This conversation is over.

Legislative Intent:
When a city attorney is tasked with interpreting a statute or ordinance the attorney is often asked to first consider the legislative intent. When asked to defer to the legislative intent when giving an opinion, the
city attorney’s first response will probably be “How in the ______________ (you fill in the blank) should I know? Legislative intent is the variable in the proverbial algebraic equation “solve for x”. It is an unknown quantity, a wild card, and sometimes a professional way of uttering the three most difficult words in all of Attorney-speak: “I don’t know”.

“Hmmmmmmm”:
You might be on to something.

“AHHHHHHHH:”
Please stop now!

“Lean into a conversation:”
This phrase can be manifested both orally and physically. Orally, this phrase often means that I am skeptical of what you have to say, but I will give you the initial benefit of the doubt and “lean into the conversation” and listen carefully to what you have to say. I also, might be subconsciously planning my retort before you even finish your narrative. By physically leaning into the conversation, I might be showing real interest, or I might be hard of hearing and need to get closer to you. In either situation, you have managed to get, (for a short time, however) the attorney’s attention. Don’t blow it. Get right to the point and make your pitch before the attorney is ready to move on to other issues.

“I will have to research that and get back to you:”
A roundabout way of saying “I don’t know.” In this case, however, the attorney has pledged to circle back and try to give you an answer to your question.

“Oh?”
Usually curiosity, with a little skepticism mixed in. Body language is also an important tool of the city attorney. The posture we present is often the first indicator of how your message is being received.

“What else?”
There has to be more to this story.

Sitting with the desk between you and the attorney:
Either the attorney is too lazy to get off their duff and walk around the desk or the attorney wants to maintain some space between the two of you. This is most likely a power play.

Nose buries in a mobile telecommunication device when you begin to speak.
Often means that there is a cute kitten video playing on Facebook.

Scratching or rubbing one’s chin.
The gesture is often practiced by men who have facial hair, although I catch myself doing it and the only hair I can comes out of my ears. I have seen this on rare occasions from a woman as well. Usually means, “I like your idea, maybe we can run with it and see where it goes.” Can also mean “my beard itches.”

Leaning back in the chair, hands locked behind the head:
“Hey, I’m listening.

Nodding at everything you say:
Usually a sign that the attorney is listening and processing what you are saying. But watch the eyes! It could be a sign that the attorney need their afternoon nap.

Hands flat on the desk:
“Have you left yet?

Looking straight through you:
As Jimmy Buffett would say, “It’s five o’clock somewhere.”
The Village of Milan was founded in 1957 on land belonging to Veneranda M Milan, wife of Salvador Milan, founder of the Village of Milan. Veranda inherited the Milan Ranch from her father Silvestre Mirabel in 1939. The ranch was approximately 10,000 acres consisting of at least four homesteads purchased from the original homesteaders and grazing land purchased from the Santa Fe Railroad. In 1939 the building on one of the homesteads burned down; another homestead in back of the Zuni Mountain Country Club had a windmill. A stone concrete stock tank, a large tin shearing plant built by Mr. Mirabel, and a smaller tin building that housed a kitchen and dining facility for the sheep shearers. Another homestead had a house, a chicken coop, a windmill, a grain building, an outhouse, and various farm animal stables and became the Milan Ranch headquarters. Salvador moved the shearing plant building to this location to be used as a barn. The last homestead consisted of a rock house, a windmill, a rock stock tanks and an outhouse. The two homesteads with homes were inhabited by sharecroppers.

These homesteads surrounded a half section of land belonging to Tom Elkins. This half section had been a dedicated school property which was purchased by Tom Elkins' family. A small house and windmill were on the property. Wilson and Sons, from Texas, bought this acreage during the carrot era, and...
Risk Takers and Visionaries

The history of the area as well as the Village of Milan has been dependent on certain individuals that were risk takers and had a vision about the area. Captain Reid has always been mentioned as a person that owned a large portion of the Bluewater Valley. The Captain was very influential in Washington, D.C. and made things happen. He was able to get the U.S. Government to allow Japanese Americans to live and farm land in the Valley during World War II.

Silvestre Mirabel built the large sheep shearing plant in what is now Milan and was instrumental in bringing Grants Union High School. Silvestre was a multi-facet individual. He was a sheep and cattle stockman, a merchant, a politician, a banker, and served on various Federal Agricultural Boards and Commissions.

Carrol Gunderson was a politician, a merchant, a buyer of wool and lambs, a banker, developed affordable housing, cleaned and warehoused beans, and was instrumental in bringing electricity to the area.

Sidney Gottlieb, a German immigrant, bought Cubero Trading Company, developed Paraje Trading Company and Villa de Cubero. Was a politician, a buyer of lambs and wood, developed the Gottlieb ranch, and was well versed in investments.

Salvador Milan, an immigrant from Mexico, was a politician, served as the Chairman of the Board of Grants State Bank, developed the Village of Milan, organized Milan Water Company, managed a sheep ranch, a meat market, a tavern, a motel, was an organizer of the Zuni Mt. Country Club, and a partner in various other businesses. Mayor Milan, like many of these individuals served on many boards. Was President of the Grants Board of Education, and the Bluewater-Toltec Irrigation Association for many years.

Ralph Card was the only person that came with the vegetable industry and stayed. Ralph managed Stanley and Card Farms and was instrumental in building a box factory, an ice plant, joint-ventured with Salvador Milan to drill the first irrigation well, farmed and packed vegetables, organized and served as President of Grants State Bank, and was an organizer of the Zuni Country Club.

Joe Fidel came to Grants from San Fidel and is a successful politician an insurance and real estate broker, a banker, a developer, and as a senior New Mexico State Senator, has been instrumental in bringing the majority, if not all, of the projects to his district during his tenure.

sold the house and property to Joe Dominguez which he used as commissary and later became Hoe's Bar. Lee Hanosh bought the Wilson farm in the 1950s, and Pete and Salvador Milan bought Joe's Bar in the late 1960s, which became the Toltec Bar, and is probably the oldest standing building in Milan.

From 1939 to 1946 the above mentioned structures were the only visible buildings on the property that was to eventually become the Village of Milan. In 1941–42 Salvador moved his family to the homestead that had a house which became the Milan Ranch where Salvador was in the sheep business. The carrot industry had been expanding the Milan Ranch where Salvador was in the sheep business. The carrot industry had been expanding and was dependent on water from Bluewater lake. Salvador was interested in developing feed for his sheep and had been farming alfalfa with lake water, and wanted to expand his sheep business by creating permanent pastures. The irrigation water was not dependable for the vast number of acres that was being developed in the area. In 1945, Salvador Milan and the Stanley and Card Farms joint ventured to drill a water well against the advice of engineers, and in fact engaged a water witch to select a site. The finding of an
ample supply of water was instrumental in the increase of the vegetable industry and the carrot became king. Salvador found that the cost of irrigating alfalfa and permanent pastures was not cost effective so he sold his sheep and mountain grazing land and entered into the vegetable business. He eventually developed five wells, and 3,000 acres of cultivated farm land, partnering with Mr. S. Lee, Stanley and Card, John Evans, George Rowley, Lambert Ross, and Ike and Gwyn Price (Navajo Marketing Company). Salvador built the last carrot packing shed in 1955, which is a Quonset hut still on Airport Rd. The shed was equipped to utilize the plastic cello bags for packaging the carrots.

The carrot industry had expanded to include the John Jacobs farms and Stanley and Card Farms from Phoenix, Arizona; John Church Farms from Salinas, California; local farms Harmon and Reid (Harmon Brothers), Fred Freas Farms, Milan and Lee Farms, and George Rowley and Sons; and Wilson and Sons from Texas. John Evans Farms, Navajo Packing Corp., and Lambert Ross did custom packing and leased some of the fields for farming.

John Evans eventually bought the area known as Golden Acres and was the last to farm carrots in 1961. Two Japanese families were instrumental in developing the vegetable farms in the Bluewater Valley. The Togami and the Yonomoto families moved to Los Lunas after the war and became large growers there. The Yonomotos moved to Albuquerque and established Yonomotos Nursery. Mr. S. Lee and his wife, who were friends of Captain Reid, were allowed to live on the Reid Ranch during the war, where he served as heavy equipment mechanic.

After the war Mr. Lee partnered with Salvador Milan and created the Milan and Lee carrot farm partnership, which is now a major portion of the Village of Milan. Besides growing carrots, they raised lettuce, pinto beans, peas, cabbage, and onions.

In 1946, Herman Atkinson leased the land between the railroad and Highway 66 and built a trading post, selling high quality Native American rugs, jewelry and pottery. He eventually bought all of the land from the overpass to Airport Road and developed the Cobra Gardens. He was so successful with this attraction that he added a restaurant and a service station. Salvador Milan saw the tourist potential and in 1947 built the Milan Motel. Salvador had always felt that the area was marginal for farming and had designated the area as a potential town site. In 1951 he added eight kitchenettes to the motel, thereby moving the farm headquarters to the present Village site.

The uranium industry needed an airport so Salvador donated the land, which he felt was a good trade for developing Airport Road.

In 1956, Salvador sold the farm land to La Quinta Corporation specifically for the water rights. The water rights were leased to the mining companies, and eventually United Nuclear became the owners of the land. In 1956 the area was developing faster than it could be planned effectively. Joe Fidel was a member the Grants City Council, and with the permission of Salvador Milan, made a motion to annex the Milan Town Site. The motion died for lack of a second, so Salvador and Joe immediately applied for village status and the Village of Milan was incorporated in 1957. The name “Village of Milan” was elected by the residents. Salvador Milan was elected its first mayor.

In order to get permission to incorporate, a plan to provide utilities was requested by the state. Electricity and telephone lines existed, but water and sewage were lacking. In September of 1956, Salvador petitioned the state for permission to develop the Milan Water Company, Inc. Salvador sold large chunks of real estate to developers in order to finance the water company, and since the developers were anxious to sell their platted lots the original dream by Salvador to develop a well planned community with a town square, includ-
ing many parks similar to the towns that he visited in Mexico and Spain, vanished. Since the Village did not have any money to begin operations, the Village Office started in the family garage next to Salvador’s residence. The garage housed the city hall and the Milan Water Company. Salvador added a small post office next to the garage, a three-car garage in back of his residence which housed the water company tools and equipment, and the fire department with the siren pole and the fire truck. Salvador had his home number listed for any emergency. On many occasions he would drive the fire truck to a fire hoping that the volunteers would follow him.

In 1957 and 1958 the Village of Milan was growing in a frenzy. Light industry, drilling companies, and supply companies needed commercial sites to service the mining companies. Salvador was leasing land on both sides of Airport Road, and trying to build the infrastructure at the same time. Civil engineers were working full time, especially since the developers were scattered throughout the Village. Subsidizing the Village, the Post Office, and financing the water company was a financial strain on Salvador. In 1958 Salvador build a new Chevron Service Station, the Dinner Bell Cafe, and the Village Barber Shop, hoping to build up his cash flow with rentals. Gramma’s Cafe and Blake’s Hamburger Drive Inn were popular eating places. The Torres family, from Belen, built the first office building in Milan in 1957, and had leases from the Atomic Energy Commission and various mining companies. During the mining bust of the 1960s the Village of Milan acquired the property for the present city hall.

In 1960 the Village of Milan was dotted with trailer camps, a large number of service stations, and restaurants. Milan boasted one of the finest steakhouse in New Mexico, four motels, and a state of the art Supermarket, a Ben Franklin Store, a clothing store, and the twenty-four hour Day and Night Market. There were also a variety of churches, and two large Oil Distributing Companies; Gunderson Oil Co. and Green Mobil Oil Co. The Zuni Mountain Country Club, incorporated in 1958, with a nine-hole golf course and swimming pool, were utilized at capacity. The small contract post office was overwhelmed with patrons, so Salvador agreed to built a new post office with a drug store attached to subsidize the small rent offered by the US Post Office. The Grants-Milan Municipal Airport was dedicated in 1958 with FFA approval, it offered an expanded runway that could accommodate the large airplanes owned by the mining companies.

Salvador personally hired a consultant to develop a downtown plan for the Village. The old motel would be
torn down and replaced with a sixty-room motel. The back property would be developed into a strip mall to complement the post office and the drug store. Before Salvador could arrange the financing for this project, rumors began to surface that there was some possibility of by-passing small New Mexico towns. Mr. Atkinson had anticipated this possibility and sold the Cobra Gardens to the Thigpen family and moved his operations to Arizona, purchasing trading posts on state roads. The Cobra Gardens became the Cactus Gardens. Milan has never had an attraction to stop tourists since then.

The 1960s bust caused by the uranium cutback bought home to the Village the first taste of the hazards of a one-industry town. All expansion plans for the Village were put on hold. Many of the small industries on Airport Road maintained a portion of their business but many bankrupted the mining companies consolidated their milling and some plants were moth balled. Phillips Petroleum sold their operation and moved out. Construction was completely halted. A plan to open a Grants State Bank Branch in Milan was put on the back burner.

During the 1960s, Salvador struggled to keep the Village of Milan solvent. The Zuni Mountain Country Club had a hard time maintaining the golf course and swimming pool; consequently the Village agreed to take over the maintenance in return for making it a municipal golf course and pool. A representative from the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration told Mr. Milan’s son that Salvador was probably the only mayor in the history of New Mexico that would borrow money personally.

The only bright side of the 1960s was that Salvador did not continue his building program which would have been a financial disaster when the interstate highway by-passed Grants and Milan. The drug store owners walked the lease and turned the inventory and the corporation over to Salvador in lieu of a lawsuit. The AEC and the mining companies dropped their leases on the Torres Building and the Torres family sold the building to the Village of Milan. The Village had a new City Hall at a fraction of its value. The businesses that depended on Highway 66 organized and tried to get the Highway Department to bypass all of the towns at the same time. Unfortunately, the Grants-Milan area was one of the first to be bypassed, with the exception of Santa Fe, because Santa Fe wanted a by-pass.

Salvador’s strategy was to get the Highway Department to build the highway in view of Milan, and allocate two interchanges. He gave the present interchange top priority because it was not on his land, and offered to sell them a right-of-way at a reasonable price in order to steer them away from other proposed sites which were up to four miles away from Milan, and two for Grants. They felt that the Village could share the west-side Grants interchange.

The 1970s bought a commercial demand for uranium and the new boom was born. The Village flourished with new construction and the addition of the Elkins sub-division north of the railroad track. The Village enjoyed a diversity of light manufacturing, drilling companies. However, they were dependent on the mining industry.

The economy supported two full service banks, one savings loan company, and a branch from a Belen bank. By the mid-1970s the memory of a bust had disappeared and the prediction that the Grants-Milan area would reach a population of 80,000 by 1990 was taken seriously. The businesses that had enjoyed spectacular growth began to expand their facilities in anticipation of this growth. The mining companies were speaking

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With the new fiscal right around the corner many of us are starting to plan our marketing strategies for FY20. Determining where to spend your marketing dollars is the first step to a successful campaign. But how many of you have sat down and truly looked at where those marketing dollars are going? Have you determined ROI? Have you looked at repeat visitation and what those visitors mean within your marketing strategy?

According to a recent study 54% of the tourism base for the Village of Ruidoso is repeat business, and yet they account for less than 4% of our marketing budget spend and contribute to well over half of our annual lodger’s tax collections alone (not counting additional GRT revenue generated while on vacation in our community). Of the 54% repeat guests, we are seeing 73% from Texas, with New Mexico and Mexico making up the majority of the remaining repeat customer base. We’re seeing Arizona sneaking in at a very distant 4th.

So what does it all mean? Repeat visitation is a heck of a lot easier and less expensive than acquiring new customers. We have long focused on Texas marketing campaigns, arguably larger than any of our marketing efforts, and it has paid immense dividends. For every two customers we attract to Ruidoso we know that at least one of them will become a repeat visitor. Our Texas marketing strategies have and will continue to pay off moving forward. We dominate the Mexican tourism sector and we spend very little money marketing in that market. We will continue to focus and steadily grow our Mexican Tourism base. Our
investments in New Mexico are marginally successful but not nearly as powerful as Texas. The tourism we see coming to Ruidoso all are from Eastern and Southern New Mexico. Why? Take a look at our value proposition. We are the Texas and the Mexican Alps. We are the closest, most affordable and easily accessible mountain town for those two demographics to travel. We know it, we own and we cater our marketing plan to that strategy. We struggle with New Mexico tourism because over half of the state lives in the Albuquerque metro area and to the North. Northern New Mexico is peppered with serene mountain towns that offer similar experiences to what we do in Ruidoso. I’m not arguing we don’t offer a unique product but the market becomes more diluted as you head just north of Albuquerque. And the majority of travelers in North America think of mountain towns as heading “North.” We get lost in the shuffle. But that’s ok. We’ve identified our target audience and by understanding our value proposition we know who to target. We can also identify similar audiences who fit within our general strategies and cater our message to grow our tourism base.

With all that being said what does the actual marketing breakdown look like? How have we created a plan for continued new growth in existing markets, growth into new markets with similar needs, and continued growth and engagement to drive repeat visitation? And how can you begin to think about your destination in a similar fashion?

As I said above, 96% of our marketing budget is spent on earning new customers. Focus these efforts across 7 major categories, Print, Military, Out of Home, Social, SEO/PPC/Display, Influencer Marketing, and TV. Target new customers by identifying your value proposition and drive brand awareness campaigns around that value proposition. This is your first chance to capture your customers attention. What is it that is unique to you? What do you do that is different than your competition? What do you have to offer that no one else does? Find your story and begin to tell it. If you do this correctly you’ll see your tourism numbers grow.

If you’re looking to grow your consumer base and you feel like you’re ready to take on a new market there are some very important things to consider. You want to identify audiences that are similar to your existing consumer base and target them with your value proposition. Using the Village of Ruidoso as an example, I know that our best chance for growth in a new market is expansion into Tucson, Arizona. There is already mild public awareness in AZ surrounding

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Jennifer Kurtz quickly boils down the reasons small businesses should care about cybersecurity. You want to keep your business, your reputation, your customers, your money and your people. You don’t like getting sued. And you want to sleep well.

Pretty hard to argue with that.

Kurtz, the Cyber Program Director at Manufacturer’s Edge, a Colorado-based nonprofit that works to boost the competitiveness of Colorado manufacturers through that state’s Manufacturing Extension Partnership, shared her expertise with attendees of New Mexico MEP’s Manufacturing Day activities in Albuquerque last October. During the New Mexico MEP Manufacturing Summit, “Thinking Machines and Smart Workforce,” Kurtz addressed the impact of cybersecurity, breaches and data theft.

Kurtz told the New Mexico MEP attendees she uses the phrase “Biz Burglary” when discussing what happens when phishing, ransomware or security breaches result in data being stolen or compromised. And, she says, it has led to financial loss and, in some cases, businesses having to close entirely.

Kurtz reports that 55 percent of small or midsized businesses have experienced data breaches or cyber attacks. In 2016 alone, 70 percent of targeted attacks were aimed at small or midsized businesses and 60 percent of those were severely impaired by the attacks. Some 50 percent of small and midsized businesses were victims of ransomware, with 48 percent of the victims paying. All told, small businesses had an average cost of $38,000 to recover from the attacks.

And the cycle always begins with an email, she said. Over a three-year period, that cost roughly $12 billion worldwide, $3 billion in the US alone.

And, Kurtz said, most businesses are at risk, especially businesses that use email, internet, have bank...
accounts and maintain computerized records including purchase orders, product plans, customer lists, personnel files and similar information. In today’s tech-based environment, that’s pretty much all businesses.

Kurtz said 94 percent of hacks are made possible by people in the organization doing something that is preventable. That can be as simple as using public networks at hotels while traveling for business, not securing computers with appropriate passwords, responding to suspicious emails or opening attachments that allow malicious software to be installed surreptitiously on a computer.

This can impact everything from supply chains to power grids and personnel information to customer data, she said.

“This is a business problem, not just a technology problem,” Kurtz said. Every business is being attacked, no matter how small. If, we mean when, it happens, you can lose your business.”

Kurtz recommends that owners and managers educate themselves on available resources and make the time to educate employees about the risks of cyber breaches and attacks. Regularly review security and technology and write and enforce simple policies to ensure secure networks, she advises. Finally, Kurtz recommends preparing to respond to a breach by regularly backing up data, developing a plan of response when breaches inevitably happen, and lining up a response team.

Find more cybersecurity resources at https://www.manufacturersedge.com/our-services/cybersecurity/.

New Mexico MEP is a nonprofit organization that helps businesses throughout the state increase profitability and competitiveness. Learn more about the resources it offers and the Manufacturing Day events that take place every October at https://newmexicomep.org/.

Finance New Mexico partners with the New Mexico Municipal League on the Grow It! project and other economic development initiatives. To learn more, go to www.FinanceNewMexico.org and www.GrowItNM.org.
SAFETY CORNER

REVIEW OF 2019 NEWBIE/VETERAN WORKSHOP

APRIL MARKED THE LAST ROUND OF NEWBIE/VETERAN WORKSHOPS FOR FY 2019 WITH 238 MAYORS, MANAGERS, AND SAFETY COORDINATORS ATTENDING.

This year’s Veterans’ curriculum included a wide variety of topics: How to Foster a Safety Culture, Cyber Liability, How Safety Impacts the Municipal Budget, Drug Testing, and an update on Medical Marijuana in New Mexico. Gummy bears were provided; however, any high was strictly from the sugar! While recreational marijuana is still illegal in New Mexico, municipalities continue to see the number of employees with a medical marijuana card increase. Much discussion was had with attendees sharing the situations they have faced. This topic tied in perfectly with the session on Drug Testing which had many attendees vowing to revisit their Drug Testing policies.

Those attending the Newbie Workshop were baptized in the fundamentals of the New Mexico Self-Insurers’ Fund and the coverages it provides to New Mexico municipalities. After learning what an experience modifier is, attendees dusted off their math skills to find out exactly how their modifier is impacting their municipality. Those who had found themselves designated as the Safety Coordinator were relieved to learn exactly what is and is not their responsibility. Attendees left with newfound knowledge of the resources available to them as they work to promote safety and loss prevention in their communities.

Although some attendees arrive at their first workshop via a direct order from their clerk to meet the dividend credit requirements, their feedback at the end of the day attests to the benefits they received. It is not uncommon for attendees to bring a group of their fellow coworkers the following year so that they too can share in the experience. What a step forward for their municipality’s safety program! Because we believe in the value of having everyone on the same page, we will commit to bringing the Newbie Workshop to any municipality that will commit to having all of their department heads and supervisors attend.

While this fiscal year’s workshops are complete, planning is underway for next year’s workshops. The Veterans’ curriculum changes each year with topics revolving around issues facing our members. Suggestions for future topics are welcome! Please email your ideas to Kathy Hennessy at khennessy@nmml.org.

We hope to see all of our municipalities represented at next year’s workshops.

‘Hey, we’ll even buy your lunch!’
The World Ahead

In 2007, I had a unique opportunity to sit in a small group for two days and observe one of the world’s leading futurists paint a picture of the year 2025. We are more than halfway there and I see the wisdom of his vision of the trends and emerging realities of our world from local to global. He described a much more crowded world (1.5 billion new people) and the certainty of accelerating technological, social, and environmental changes that will present all of us with “hyperpromise and hyperperil.”

He highlighted the magnitude and velocity of the changes that would increase a sense of anxiety, fear, and polarization that could divide people (old-young, urban-rural, citizen-immigrant, affluent-poor, left-right, black-white, Christian-Muslim etc.). He envisioned opportunities and solutions that would require leaders, at all levels (local, national, international), to grow the capacity to counter polarization and division by finding new ways to build structures and alliances that bring organizations, communities, and people together.

Think Globally, Act Locally

The wisdom of this bumper sticker becomes clear because awareness of challenges in the big picture (the USA as a country or the world) could paralyze the will to creatively act. “What can I do about ALL this?” It is important to refocus realistic awareness of the big picture to the level of a work team, an organization, a neighborhood, or a community where each one of us can connect, engage, and influence others. The essence of leadership is influence. Some of the most powerful acts of local leadership I have witnessed were by “ordinary” people without formal authority or titles who, by the force of their courage, creativity, and moral example, showed others the way forward. In these times, we can’t wait for the leaders with titles and formal authority who are unable or unwilling to lead. We need people who show us the way by example.

The Power of the Third Side

The “leaders” of a work team, department, organization, nonprofit, or coalition need to learn how to build the “THIRD SIDE.” This term comes from a book with the same name by William Ury. He describes ten key roles that people can assume, like a mantle, to establish a constructive presence in the midst of a polarized situation. Instead of being against others, speak and act for the common good, address unmet needs, and affirm principles that unite rather than divide. Before I describe one of these powerful roles, let’s look at the challenge: the dynamics of POLARIZATION that separate and divide individuals and groups.

Polarization Defined

This is a state of hostility, antagonism, antipathy, conflict, and repugnance that can easily fester and infect an entire social structure. As each side takes action to promote or defend its interests, territory, and priorities against the other, the consequences of their

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HR DEVELOPMENT

HARASSMENT AWARENESS AND PREVENTION IN THE #METOO ERA

By Linda Strauss
Strauss HR Training, Consulting, Mediation, Career
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Have you ever heard any of these statements in your workplace?

“She has no sense of humor.”
“I didn’t mean it.”
“I’m just an affectionate person.”
“It was mutual… until I dumped him.”
“I guess I should never tell another joke/give another hug/talk about anything personal/be friends outside of work with anyone again ever.”
“Hey, if I tell you something will you promise to keep it confidential? I don’t want to get anyone fired or get retaliated against.”
“Our boss is so mean this has become a hostile working environment!”
“I don’t even want any members of the opposite sex on my team, too much risk of getting accused of something, especially if they’re attractive.”
“This is a ‘he said/she said’, there’s no way to resolve it.”
“This is a witch hunt! What happened to innocent until proven guilty?”
“How am I supposed to get anything done if I have to spend all my time being the ‘politically-correct’ police?”
I’ve heard them all, sometimes when conducting harassment training, sometimes while conducting an investigation into claims of workplace harassment. And I have good news, or bad news, depending on how you look at it, none of them fly in the workplace. These are misconceptions and myths, some of them are even illegal.

Workplace discrimination and harassment have been illegal since the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Workplace harassment more recently came to the forefront when #MeToo became a movement in October of 2017 on the heels of allegations of sexual harassment against media mogul Harvey Weinstein. Social media feeds became flooded with people coming forward to declare that they too had been sexually harassed. The #MeToo movement hit home in New Mexico in December 2017 when it became public that a NM lobbyist had accused a NM legislator of sexual harassment.

I was asked by Maggie Toulouse Oliver, New Mexico Secretary of State’s office, to conduct harassment training for lobbyists – the first of its kind in the US. Many lobbyists are self-employed, they have no boss, no company to protect them, no Human Resources department with whom to lodge a complaint. Since legislators are elected officials, they have no boss per se to whom to complain. Secretary Toulouse Oliver has no jurisdiction over the legislators, but her office manages lobbyist credentials, so she offered lobbyists training on recognizing and preventing harassment. While Secretary Toulouse Oliver and Speaker Egolf worked on complaint procedures, in January of 2018, I educated the lobbyists on workplace discrimination and harassment.

I have since conducted this training at many NM workplaces looking to educate their staff and management on how to recognize, prevent and report discrimination and harassment. Some cities and states have begun passing laws to make harassment training mandatory. Some even mandate that the training is conducted in person versus less effective, less impactful online training.

The bad news is that saying management or employees didn’t know any better is not a defense if an employer is sued for harassment. The good news is that if there is a harassment claim in your workplace, and you’ve provided training, that shows up in court as a good faith effort at preventing it. While harassment training is not mandatory for NM employers, it can help to prevent harassment, and provide important information to employees who experience or are aware of harassment in the workplace.
VOTER TURNOUT RATES AMONG ALL VOTING AGE AND MAJOR RACIAL AND ETHNIC GROUPS WERE HIGHER THAN IN 2014

By Jordan Misra, Jordan Misra is a survey statistician in the Census Bureau’s Education and Social Stratification Branch.

The November 2018 election is widely recognized for its high voter turnout. Census Bureau data released today show who is behind the historic 11 percentage point increase from the last midterm election in 2014.

Voter turnout went up among all voting age and major racial and ethnic groups. Fifty-three percent of the citizen voting-age population voted in 2018, the highest midterm turnout in four decades, while the 2014 election had the lowest.

Among 18- to 29-year-olds, voter turnout went from 20 percent in 2014 to 36 percent in 2018, the largest percentage point increase for any age group — a 79 percent jump.

Data from the Current Population Survey’s Voting and Registration Supplement out today provide insight into the characteristics of those that cast their ballots in this record-breaking midterm election.

Who is Behind the Historic Increase?
Voter turnout went up more in some groups than others from 2014 to 2018:

- Among 18- to 29-year-olds, voter turnout went from 20 percent in 2014 to 36 percent in 2018, the largest percentage point increase for any age group — a 79 percent jump.
- Among men and women, voter turnout increased by 11 and 12 percentage points respectively.
- Voter turnout increased among non-Hispanic Asians by 13 percentage points, a 49 percent increase.
- Among Hispanics, voter turnout increased by
13 percentage points, a 50 percent increase in Hispanic voter turnout.

- Non-Hispanic black voter turnout increased by 11 percentage points.

- Those with higher levels of education had higher levels of voter turnout in 2018. Those with less than a high school education had the smallest increase in voter turnout (5 percentage points). Those with a high school diploma or equivalent had the second-lowest increase (8 percentage points).

- Voting by native-born and naturalized citizens both increased by 12 percentage points. This increase is not significantly different between native-born and naturalized citizens.

- Unlike the 2014 midterm election, voter turnout among those living in nonmetropolitan areas (up 8 points) was lower than for those living in metropolitan areas (up 12 points).

Gender Gap

A record number of women were elected to the House of Representatives in the November 2018 election. Additionally, women continued to vote at higher rates than men, just as they have in every midterm election since 1998.

In the 2018 midterm election, 55 percent of women voted compared with 52 percent of men, a 3 percentage point gap.

Census Bureau voting and registration data also include a detailed table package of key estimates, which allows data users to take a deeper dive into the numbers behind elections.

Estimates in the 2018 Election table package show that the difference between male and female voter turnout varied among different demographic groups.

Gender Gap by Age

While younger women voted at higher rates than younger men, women age 65 and older voted at lower rates than men in the same age range.

In 2018, among those age 65 and older, voter turnout was 65 percent for women and 68 percent for men. In contrast, 38 percent of women 18-29 years old voted and 33 percent of men of the same age group voted.

Gender Gap by Race and Hispanic Origin

Voter turnout for non-Hispanic black women was 55 percent, compared with 47 percent for non-Hispanic black men, an 8 percentage point gap.

Hispanic women voted at higher rates than Hispanic men, with 2018 voter turnout rates of 43 percent and 37 percent, respectively.

The difference between male and female turnout was two percentage points among non-Hispanic whites. The difference between male and female turnout was not significantly different among non-Hispanic Asians.

Gender Gap by Employment Status

In 2018, 49 percent of unemployed women and 40 percent of unemployed men voted, a 9 percentage point difference.

The gap between employed men and women is smaller than the gap between unemployed men and women. In 2018, 57 percent of employed women voted compared with 52 percent of employed men.

Among those who were not in the labor force, 53 percent of women voted compared with 51 percent of men.

Alternative Voting

The availability of alternative voting methods continues to change how voters vote. Alternative voting methods include any method other than voting in person on Election Day, such as early voting and voting by mail.

In 2018, 40 percent of voters used an alternative voting method. The percentage of voters that cast their ballot early or by mail usually declines slightly in midterm elections relative to the preceding presidential election.

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Today at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, you have to look closely for evidence that one of the worse school shootings in U.S. history happened here 20 years ago.

The building looks like any of the thousands of American high schools across the country. The students hanging out in front of the school or practicing on the football field weren’t even born on April 20, 1999, when two student gunmen opened fire on their classmates, killing 12 students and a teacher.

But the markers are there — if you look closely enough.

Just over the hill from the school at an adjacent park is the Columbine memorial, which pays tribute to the people murdered in the massacre. The football stadium is named for Frank DeAngelis, the principal who led the school through the crisis and stayed on for another 15 years.

The softball field honors teacher Dave Sanders, who bled to death in a classroom while waiting hours for medical help.

Protocol at the time called for sheriff’s deputies to wait outside and secure the perimeter until the specialized SWAT team could arrive. Columbine was one of the first mass shootings at a U.S. school, and it changed how schools and law enforcement prepare to confront an active shooter.

“In 1999, that’s what deputies did. They ran toward danger, and then they contained it. Now, the training is different,” says Jeff Shrader, sheriff of Jefferson County, Colorado, whose deputies respondcd to the incident at Columbine two decades ago. “They’re going to go to the shooter. They’re going to do everything they can to neutralize the threat. To identify it and to neutralize it so that hopefully more lives would be saved.

At Columbine, first responders were also hampered by poor communication and uncertainty about the school’s layout.

“One of the things we were able to do shortly after that was to put maps of schools in command vehicles so that they were readily accessible,” the sheriff says. “In our command operations center, we maintain those, but they were things that just weren’t thought of in that point in time.”

Responding quickly to a school shooter is not the only thing that’s changed since Columbine.

Visitors used to be able to walk right into most American schools. Now, exterior doors are locked, and many schools use an intercom buzz-in security system. Interior classroom doors often lock now, allowing students and teachers to lock themselves inside. “There is a film that can be put on windows to effectively render them bulletproof.”

The U.S. Secret Service’s National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) finds that school shooters often experience some sort of stressor — a setback, challenge or loss — leading up to an attack.

“They had difficulty coping with perceived injustice or bullying that was happening to them at the school, whether it was real or perceived,” says Dr. Lina Alathari, chief of the NTAC. “They had a sense that they were being bullied, and in a majority of incidents, these students were being bullied.”

FBI investigators concluded the Columbine killers were not bullied.

Today, the Secret Service recommends that all schools establish a threat assessment team, made up of
teachers, counselors and others, to identify students in distress or who might exhibit concerning behavior with the aim of stopping violence before it happens.

"There is no specific type of student who would carry out an attack," Alathari says. "In a majority of cases, these were mainstream students. The most common performance, they were As and Bs. They came from different types of families, intact families, single family homes. They were popular. Some were loners. So, there really is no single profile that you can point to and say that is the type of student that would carry out an attack." Markers that threat assessment teams should look for include students whose grades decline, are experiencing suicidal thoughts or becoming more isolative, as well as other changes in behavior.

“This is when we need to be intervening as a community to offer that student assistance before it escalates to the point where they view violence as an option,” Alathari says.

To date, the NTAC has trained more than 100,000 school personnel, law enforcement and others with a stake in school safety on how to identify and assess and intervene with students of concern.

About 90% of U.S. schools have a plan for what to do in the event of a school shooting. Seventy percent of schools drill students using that plan, according to the U.S. Department of Education.

Columbine survivor Samantha Haviland was a 16-year-old junior when the shootings happened at her high school. Two decades later, she is director of counseling for Denver Public Schools, and she has concerns about how lock down drills impact students.

“To remind our students over and over again that you are not safe, you are not safe, you are not safe, is causing a lot of anxiety,” Haviland says. “And we have students who are jumping out of windows during drills because they think it’s real because someone dropped a book at the wrong time.”

She says there is a part of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder called hyper-vigilance, where a person is always looking for exits, places to hide or how to escape, and keeping an eye out for who might try to hurt you.

Former Columbine principal Frank DeAngelis has written a book on his experiences and also discusses school safety in "They Call Me 'Mr. De.'"

Former Columbine principal Frank DeAngelis has written a book on his experiences and also discusses school safety in "They Call Me 'Mr. De.'"

“That hyper-vigilance takes up a lot of brain capacity and really decreases our students’ ability to focus on education when they’re in school. So, they’re not learning at the same rate that maybe you or I did when we went to school,” Haviland says.

In 81% of the school shooting incidents the NTAC studied, other students knew that the potential perpetrator was about to carry out an attack or was interested in doing so.

More schools are adopting procedures that teach students how to safely report suspicious behavior.

"It’s important for kids to see something, say something, hear something, say something,” DeAngelis says, “but then we need to do something as adults, and we need to follow up, and that is a key component."
our brand. The audience looks very similar to Texas and Mexico with our value proposition fulfilling their wants and needs. We are the closest, most affordable, and easily accessible mountain town to Tucson. With the exception of Flagstaff, which is equidistance to Ruidoso. Once you’ve identified the audiences where you’re currently having the most success you can target lookalike audiences that meet similar demographics and expand your consumer base with precision.

Repeat visitation is your bread and butter. As stated above, it is much easier and more cost effective to earn repeat business than it is to attract new customers. The cost to engage the audience is marginal and your ROI is tremendous. The Village of Ruidoso sees a $53.33 ROI for every dollar spent marketing to our existing visitor base. Engaging your existing visitor/customer base is incredibly important. Luckily the internet, email and social media have made our jobs much easier. We funnel all of our customers into these 3 areas and we continue to engage and communicate with these customers on a daily basis. We drive all information-based queries to our website which is the work horse behind our operation. Among other things it houses our events calendar, travel ideas, tips and tricks, and a sign-up form to our monthly newsletter. We have a monthly newsletter that is a 2-minute read, where our engaged audience gets seasonally appropriate information about the happenings in and around our area. I cannot express enough the value of starting an email newsletter. When you start collecting user information you own that list. It’s yours and no one can take it from you. There are lots of amazing platforms available to run an email marketing campaign. We use Mail Chimp. It’s simple, cheap and effective. Find something that works for you and start a monthly newsletter. Ensure that your newsletter is a short easy read that is relevant and informational. You don’t want to overwhelm your audience and lose consumer engagement. You want to maintain the relationship and continue the engagement to drive repeat visitation. The third element we use to engage our existing customer base is social media. With over 69% of US adults on social media, you need to be active on a handful of platforms to increase continued engagement with repeat visitors. You should at a minimum create new posts daily on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. You can use the platforms for PSA’s – “it’s snowing in Ruidoso” or “check out the new water park at the lake.” You can also use the platforms to distribute information on upcoming events and happenings in and around your community. As always video is king and is the most effective way to drive your message on social media. Your engaged customers will be your greatest advocates. Social media allows them to share your brand with their audience thus driving organic growth through referral.

A lesser thought of way to engage your existing consumer base is through supporting community-based events. You should work with community partners to establish long term events that keep your visitors wanting to come back to you YoY. It’s particularly useful to identify events that can fill shoulder weekends or seasons. It’s also important to reinvest in your community. Allocate funds to the police force, convention center, P&Z and other departments to account for the increase in tourism. Focus your funding to your economic drivers. The Village of Ruidoso invests a lot of funds with our Parks and Rec department (trail development, park development, camping...
expansion etc). You need to continue to give your existing base a reason to want to come back. New additions to Parks and Rec, bigger and better community events and a backbone that can support the influx in tourism all lend to a better consumer experience and continued future visitation.

As always if you have any questions please feel free to reach out and ask.

Cheers,

Justin Huffmon 505.660.1118
Justin@DiscoverRuidoso.com
CONTINUED STORIES

Our Town
Continued from page 13

in terms of billions of dollars and hundreds of nuclear reactors. All of the energy companies were investing in the uranium industry, and for the first time there were local people talking in terms of millions of dollars. The local banks grew from total core deposits of about $12 million in 1970, to about $85 million in 1980.

The 1980s witnessed the uranium meltdown of the economy. Mayor Milan died in 1979, and the Village had a new group of Mayors that had to cope with the economic depression of the area. Valencia County split in 1981 and Cibola County was established. The new county had to deal with approximately 8,000 high paying job losses. The number of businesses that failed or moved is hard to calculate. Most of the business directories of that era list a majority of businesses that do not exist today. The empty buildings and vacant lots that exist today are part of the legacy that the one-industry uranium mines left the area. The school systems became the biggest employer. Prisons and tourism became the topic of economic diversity; however, the false optimism that the uranium industry would eventually return was in everyone’s conversation.

Eddie Jaramillo followed Salvador Milan as Mayor. Unfortunately, Mayor Jaramillo died shortly after being elected and Toby Michael was appointed in his place. The next Mayor was Warren Mathers which was fortunate because of his experience in fiscal matters. Warren was a retired financial officer from the Grants School System and was able to keep the Village fiscally sound. The right person at the right time.

In the 1980s the traffic on I-40 was beginning to become a topic of possible opportunity and tourism was placed as a top priority. Consultants pointed out that if Grants could stop ten percent of the traffic on I-40 it could translate into a bigger industry than mining industry. It was evident that they were an economic team spirit between the Village, County, and City of Grants to work on joint projects. The Village of Milan used Industrial Revenue Bonds to create the Petro Truck Stop, and the County built the prison complex in Milan. Legislators brought the district office of the New Mexico Highway Department and Grants built Riverwalk Park and a woman’s prison. The El Maipais Wilderness Area was designated a National Monument and a federal grant built the Northwest New Mexico Visitors’ Center on the Grants Industrial Park.

There has been an attempt during the 1990s to identify attraction that would entice tourists to stop and stay in the area overnight, but there seems to be a struggle to determine what kind of attraction would be possible, especially with the limited resources in the area.

The history of the area is one of boom or bust and that vast amount of building in the area takes place during the boom. Unfortunately the construction that takes place is usually specialized towards whatever the industry is that caused the boom, and most of the construction becomes useless during the bust or even the next boom.

It is apparent that only a few of all the facilities that were used during these boom eras are presently used for their intended purpose and a few can even be recognized for the purpose they were built for, with the exception of the old gypsum plant which closed this year. The value of the property is currently a fraction of the original cost and the many buildings that were built to provide retail goods, services, and office space are empty and if rented command rents that were priced during the late 1950s and 1960s. The businesses that have flourished are those that were able to export their goods and services to other areas, such as Mr. Taylor Mill Works, concrete and gravel companies, Miller Supply, wholesale oil and gas companies and some ranching enterprises.

Although the economy in the Village of Milan has not grown very much in the last twenty years it has become more stable and most jobs are government based, including the prisons, the schools, the highway department, the municipalities, the county, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Park Service, and the new Northwest New Mexico Visitor’s Center. The designation of El Malpais National Monument should be a targeted tourist attraction that presents an opportunity for jobs and businesses.

The Village has an opportunity to re-identify itself and determine what it will be in the future. The Village has the advantage of a rail, interstate, and air system. The land surrounding the Village lends itself toward future development especially if the Village positions itself in the water rights arena. The Village has clean air and clear skies to market. In order to market these natural amenities the Village must develop an attractive clean community that is friendly to the potential resident or tourist.
**Building Bridges**  
*Continued from page 19*

actions can hurt non-aligned stakeholders and weaken the whole. In four decades as a professional mediator, I have seen polarization dynamics damage and, at times, tear apart work teams, families, family businesses, churches, university academic departments, nonprofit organizations, companies, neighborhoods, and communities.

**How Polarization Works**

The 'fog of war' that confuses or blinds in violent, escalating military conflict also can develop in social and group conflict waged with different forms of power. In a polarized climate (the "war"), perception is often distorted by the weight of powerful emotions (anger and fear), moral righteousness, arrogance, lack of humility, and diminished capacity for reflection and deliberation. In this perceptual "fog", each side tends to strongly identify with the sense of being wronged or mistreated by the other. Each side tends to develop a story about being victimized by the other and their own rightness. This narrative releases them from accountability to the other side and excludes any merit to the other side's concerns. The struggle continues fueled by moral justification without any willingness to listen and understand.

It is important to respect the negative power of polarization. The three primary behavioral characteristics of polarization can be dangerous because they have a disease-like capacity to multiply and spread unless addressed.

**Volutility** Common interactions without any controversy can unpredictably and rapidly deteriorate into acrimony and aggression, with either side, or both, intensely reacting to a real or perceived provocation as "disrespect" or "a personal attack." For this reason, adversaries often choose to avoid each other. However, the absence of effective, direct communication channels often increases the level of mistrust, intensifying the polarization dynamic.

**Suspicion** Motives are always suspect. Adversaries tend to perceive actions, words, and events in a way that is consistent with the existing story about "who they are and how they treat us." For example, a neutral gesture or an honest inquiry can be misinterpreted as "a trick to manipulate us to their advantage."

**Oversimplification** Complex issues are reduced to us vs. them, either you are with us or against us, right vs. wrong, and win-lose. Human beings become stereotypes with labels ('jerker', 'bully', 'egomaniac', 'slacker', 'freeloader', 'ingrate', 'racist', 'tyrant', 'victim').

**Strategies** Leaders can model and teach others proven, proactive strategies to counter these powerful patterns. The strategies are not complicated, but they require courage, perseverance, and discipline to implement, overcome likely resistance, and recover from any setbacks.

- Improve communication channels and create forums for dialogue.
- Use guidelines for acceptable behavior and 'neutral' facilitation to establish and sustain respectful interactions.
- Seize small opportunities to build a working level of trust.
- Strengthen the non-polarized middle (the 'third side'). Enlist others to act as bridge-builders, voices of moderation, and advocates for the common good.
- There are no quick fixes for polarization. It is a journey that requires patience and endurance.

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**SAVE THE DATE**

**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**AUGUST 28-30**

**LAS CRUCES**
America Counts
Continued from page 30

The use and availability of alternative voting methods varied by state. In the 2018 election, early voting was available in 39 states. Some states require that voters state a reason or excuse for mailing an absentee ballot, while others do not (no-excuse absentee voting). Three states (Washington, Oregon and Colorado) have all-mail voting systems.

The three states with the highest percentage point increases in alternative voting rates from 2014 were Utah, Texas and Georgia. Alternative voting increased by 36 percentage points in Utah, 25 points in Texas, and 21 points in Georgia.

This high increase in alternative voting in these states is likely the result of Utah’s ballot initiatives and expanded mail voting opportunities, and the high-profile elections in Texas and Georgia.

States without the option to vote early and those that require voters to provide an excuse for voting absentee, had some of the lowest alternative voting rates in the country.
BUILDING NETWORKS TO SUPPORT VETERANS:
A PATH TO PROGRESS FOR ALL AND A MATTER
OF NATIONAL SECURITY

As the nation nears two decades of war in Afghanistan
and Iraq, horrifying reports of suicides among veterans
continue and underscore the crisis in mental health,
social isolation, and resource coordination. In addition,
as research by NLC has shown, veterans remain on the
leading edge of one of the largest demographic changes
we have ever seen and face significant challenges to
ensure they can safely age-in-place.

All of this is happening as the historic progress on
veteran homelessness continues, with a more than 5
percent decline from 2017 to 2018, representing a nearly
50 percent decline since 2010. And yet, more than
14,500 veterans are estimated to be sleeping on the
streets of the country they have defended.

Building on the progress made and directly
confronting these challenges requires coordination
and collaboration driven not only by data, but also by
persistent local leadership.

At the center, these issues are a fundamental matter
of national security, as taking care of those who serve is
elemental to the viability of the all-volunteer force model.

Why should any parent encourage their child to
serve, if the nation does not honor that commitment
with the supports necessary to address service-related
need when that person comes home?

Why should any woman or man raise their hand to
defend the flag, if later in life they will struggle to use
the bathroom in their own home because of inadequate
access to accommodate a wheelchair resulting from
military service?

Why should anyone put their life on the line, if we
as a country cannot promise that they will not sleep on
a sidewalk when their service is complete?

These challenges are multi-faceted and complex,
but the progress made on veteran homelessness offers
promise and hope that issues once thought intractable
can be solved.

Last month as part of NLC’s Congressional City
Conference, more than 40 elected officials and leaders
of local veteran-serving organizations came together
to build and strengthen efforts to holistically meet the
needs of veterans and their families. Participants came
from two dozen distinct communities and joined with
national partners from the National Veterans Intermediary (NVI) as a pragmatic model for making progress.

Thomas Winkel from the Arizona Coalition for
Military Families reported on the dramatic progress on
stemming veteran suicide that they were able to help
facilitate using the principals of collective impact. As
part of their Be Connected effort, the coalition devel-
opes, disseminates, and implements a variety of treat-
ment methods that provide suicide inventions as far
before a moment of crisis as possible.

Kate Hatten, Executive Director of the Peak Military
Care Network, walked participants through the process
for developing and strengthening an organization that
provides the essential role of lead coordinator to facil-
itate collaboration. Thanks to PMCN, Ft. Carson, the
U.S. Air Force Academy and the tens of thousands of
military families who call Colorado Springs home have
a one-stop location for access to benefits and services
ranging from housing, healthcare, and employment, to
education, childcare, and caregiver support.

Participants identified specific goals for establishing
and strengthening their local partnerships at home
and will be offered on-going learning opportunities
on issues including how to use data to serve vulnera-
ble populations, homeless services coordination, and
transportation.

In addition to the forum, members of NLC’s Mili-
tary Communities Council were also briefed on this
work and invited to join the national ecosystem facili-
tated by NVI.

For more information contact Elisha Harig-Blaine,
Manager (Veterans & Special Needs), harig-blaine@nlc.
org.
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YOU ARE INVITED!
Community Revitalization and Brownfields

Free Brownfield Workshop in Ruidoso on June 25, 2019
Ruidoso Convention Center, 111 Sierra Blanca Drive, Ruidoso, NM 88345

Hello, Community Leaders, Planners, and Economic Development Stakeholders!

I wanted to let you all know about a free brownfields workshop being co-hosted by the Village of Ruidoso, the New Mexico Environmental Department, and the Technical Assistance to Brownfields Program (TAB) at Kansas State University. Cost is free and lunch will be provided, but registration is requested by June 21, 2019.

What is a Brownfield? Does your community have an abandoned building, old gas station, junk yard or other potentially contaminated property that is impeding future growth? Do you look at these sites and wonder where funding could come from to remake the site as a contributor to your community? Is there speculation that the site might have contamination and considered to be a brownfield, or are the buildings just obsolete?

This workshop is designed to help you:
- Learn how brownfield revitalization can be part of your community’s economic development strategy;
- Understand liability and options for addressing blighted properties;
- Access available resources to facilitate redevelopment of Brownfield sites;
- Hear from state and national leaders on funding and resources available to your community;
- Hear from communities who have successfully applied for and utilized funding.

Who should attend? Local and regional government officials, economic and community development organizations, lenders and real-estate professionals, environmental consultants, property owners, and anyone interested in learning about brownfields and financial resources for local redevelopment.

REGISTER NOW!

To register, go to the workshop webpage at: https://www.ksutab.org/education/workshops
(If you need assistance with your registration, please contact Sheree Walsh, chsr@ksu.edu, 785-532-6519)

For more information contact:
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Please share this information with your colleagues, collaborators, and friends; please feel free to forward this information to any listservs or announcement postings you have to help get the word out.

We hope to see you there!

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