



Doña Ana County

Las Cruces, New Mexico



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Doña Ana County News

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS THE KEY TO ATTRACTING GOOD-PAYING JOBS

Doña Ana County residents are by and large fortunate to live in an area where the cost of living is reasonable and there is a steady availability of jobs at most income levels.

In the Santa Fe-Taos corridor of the state, property values are being artificially propelled upward by a steady migration of wealthy newcomers – including movie stars. In those areas, many jobs are focused in the service area – waiting tables, bartending, etc. – and the service workers have an increasingly hard time making ends meet, especially in the pursuit of affordable housing.

As Doña Ana County continues to grow, we must be vigilant about maintaining an economic balance that sustains a reasonable cost of living while simultaneously fueling the creation of new jobs and personal property equity return. In that effort, we have a number of factors working in our favor.

Don Schjeldahl, director of the Austin Company Facilities Location Group, recently wrote a letter to the director of the Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance in which he provided some thoughts about what's working in Doña Ana County's favor as we collectively market our area to the world as a place to do business and create

jobs.

The following paragraphs are excerpted from Schjeldahl's letter:

- "Borderplex development [near Santa Teresa] could significantly impact the economy of southern Doña Ana County... The success of [Santa Teresa] is highly dependent on economic and political decisions played out on a global stage. I believe Borderplex will take care of itself."
- "[Doña Ana County] has a knowledge tradition virtually unprecedented for communities its size. NASA, White Sands, NMSU and the Physical Science Laboratory have a long history of marrying highly trained people and capital resources to solve highly technical problems. Logically, you would expect knowledgeable people technological resources and a tradition for problem solving to be a natural conduit for attracting a wide array of technological companies to [the area]."
- "[Doña Ana County] has a number of attributes that are attractive to companies seeking to perform low-cost, high-quality manufacturing. [Doña Ana County] has a large pool of low-cost labor, large tracts of good quality, utility-served industrial land, two class-one railroads, good air service through El Paso and east/west and north/south interstate highways."
- "[Doña Ana County has] good quality of life, including recreational opportunities, good health care, housing alternatives and moderate climate available at a reasonable cost."

The comments above demonstrate how good we look to the outside world as a potential place to build industry, create jobs and move forward as a community committed to responsible, managed growth. During the last year, Las Cruces has been aggressively marketing itself based on the Forbes/Milken and Money Magazine rankings that appeared last June. That marketing initiative spills over into all of Doña Ana County, and as a result we're seeing more and more interest in our area from outside entities and agencies.

In short, we've been discovered. When Taos and Santa Fe got discovered, the resulting boom had some negative impacts that compromised the quality of life for many residents of those areas. Our challenge as we continue to market our area is to learn from the misfortunes of other counties and to make a concerted effort to maintain a balance that does not leave anyone's potential untapped. We need for our growth to be managed in such a way that it embraces our diversity and cultural dynamics rather than imposing a new way of life and a new set of problems on our long-time residents.

We can achieve that goal by continuing to plan and zone development across the county in ways that are appropriate and well-thought-through. We're on the right track.