



Interagency Working Group on  
Coal & Power Plant Communities  
& Economic Revitalization

# INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP FOUR CORNERS RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

## COMMUNITY UPDATE

July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023



**Brian Anderson**

*Energy Communities IWG Executive Director and Senior Advisor on  
Energy Communities, U.S. Department of Energy*

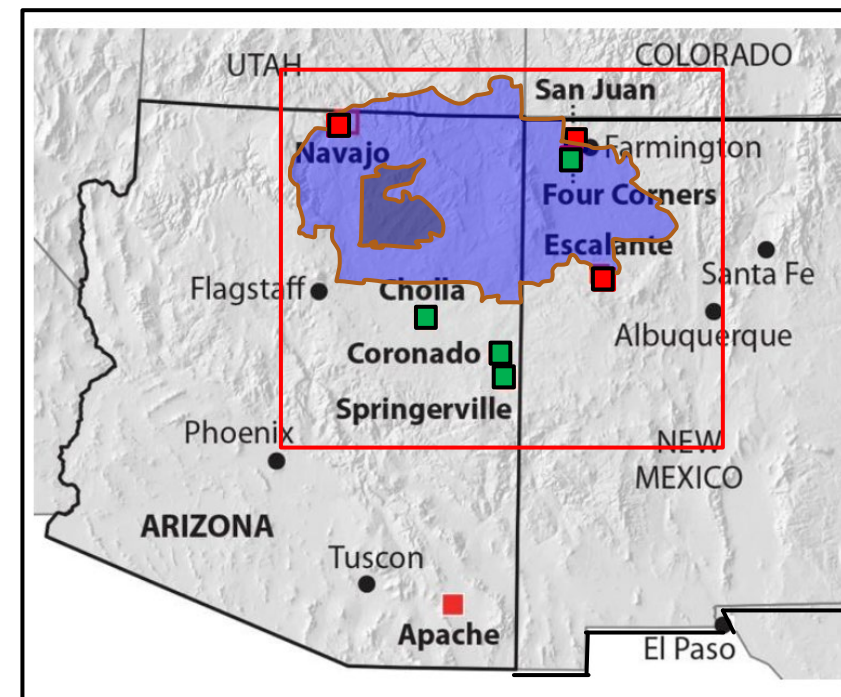
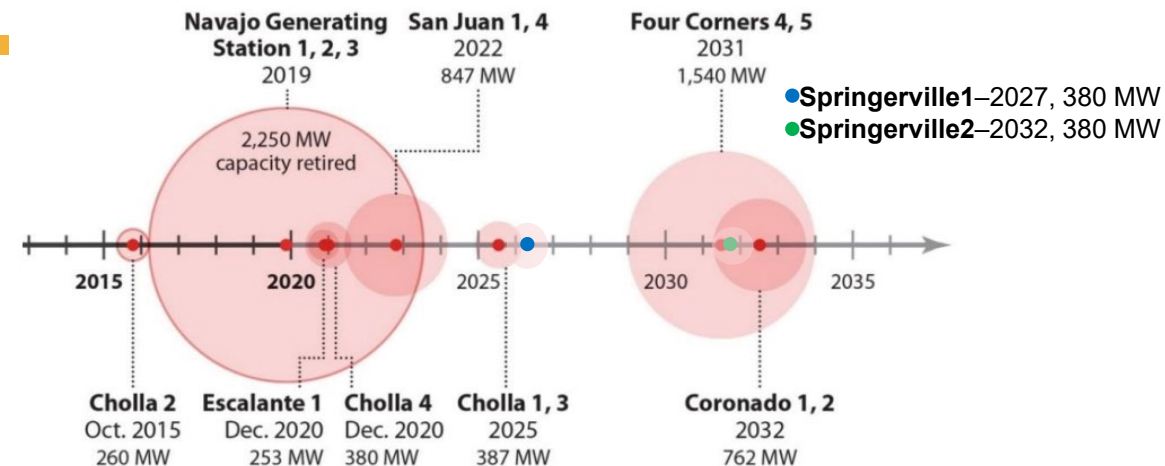


**Kevin John**

*Technical Lead, Four Corners Rapid Response Team*

# The Four Corners Rapid Response Team (4C-RRT)

- The IWG ranked list of 25 communities for near-term investment using existing federal agency programs and funding from the FY21 budget and American Rescue Plan
  - Initial Focus: Farmington, NM
  - Emerging Focus: Arizona (non-metropolitan area)
- 8 coal-fired power plants exist in these areas—7 in the Four Corners alone—with 3 closures since 2019
- Nuanced interfaces between state and tribal governments, as well as regional agency representatives
- Additional Focus:
  - Central Utah (non-metropolitan area)
  - Montezuma County, Colorado



# Four Corners Rapid Response Team (4C-RRT)

- Kicked off August 25, 2022, at San Juan College School of Energy in Farmington, NM
- **Federal representation**
  - Kate Gordon, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of Energy
  - David Turk, Deputy Secretary of Energy
  - Deb Haaland, Secretary, Department of Interior
  - Brian Deese, Director of National Economic Council
  - Ali Zaidi, Deputy National Climate Advisor
- **State and tribal representation**
  - President Nez, Navajo Nation
  - Timothy Nuvangyaoma, Hopi Tribe of Arizona
  - Alicia Keyes, Secretary, NM Economic Development
- **Regional stakeholders**
  - 4C Economic Development
  - Navajo Technical University
  - San Juan College
  - Residents of the Navajo Nation and Farmington communities
  - Numerous clean energy project leaders



“Energy workers and communities have powered communities for generations. We are thrilled that the Biden-Harris Administration has made billions in investments available to help these communities realize new economic activities that are equitable and accessible to all.”

- Deputy Secretary Turk

# Team, process, and approach

- Charter and workplan based on feedback from August kickoff meeting and subsequent listening/learning sessions
- Regular communications with the IWG via monthly meetings with regional agency representatives
- Ongoing engagement with state agencies for additional leveraging, with focus on NM to start
- Engagement with elected officials (tribal, non-tribal) and community leaders at all levels



Office of Management and Budget/Domestic Policy Council



U.S. Department of Energy



U.S. Department of Treasury



U.S. Department of the Interior



U.S. Department of Agriculture



U.S. Department of Commerce



U.S. Department of Labor



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



U.S. Department of Transportation



U.S. Department of Education



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



Appalachian Regional Commission

# What we've heard thus far: Workforce development (colleges, universities, secondary schools)

- **Access to broadband** is major obstacle for students and faculty
- **Timelines are too long to receive federal funding** when awards are granted (several months)—funds are urgently needed now
- Grant writing is labor/time intensive; few have dedicated grant writers on staff; application processes are not easy to navigate
- **Technical assistance is needed** for proposals to develop programs related to new economies (e.g. hydrogen, IT, bioenergy)
- Students travel long distances (up to 2 hours) to schools, often just to access Internet, with no public transport available
- Unclear what types of jobs new energy economies will bring and what skills will be needed (e.g. hydrogen)
- Federal opportunities require workforce **reskilling within one year**—this is not feasible and needs to be extended

## Info Pull

### NTU Provost

- Spec sheets for labs and instrumentation
- List of recent grant applications

### Aztec Superintendent

- List of recent grant applications
- Entrepreneurial seminar

### SJC Trades & Technology

- List of recent grant applications

### Diné College

- List of recent grant applications

# What we've heard thus far: Industry and economic development

- Long timelines for **permitting and workplan approvals** (up to 2 years) are delaying new job opportunities for the region—these must be expedited to enable rapid economic transition
- Access to **broadband** is an obstacle for attracting new businesses
- Lack of **infrastructure**/space to house new businesses is an obstacle
- Cost sharing is burdensome for local companies struggling to keep the lights on
- **Technical assistance** is needed for independent reviews and economic impact assessments
- 4C is unique; multiple jurisdictions make economic development extremely difficult; help is needed at the federal level to coordinate amongst various agencies to expedite processes
- Need help interpreting new legislation on 45Q (tribes vs non-tribes)
- Regional grant writing expert is needed to support numerous priority areas

## Info Pull

### Farmington Economic Development

- List of recent grant applications

### 4CED

- Competitive asset map
- Request for tech assist on hydropower

### SJC (4CED board members)

- PNM impact analysis
- 3<sup>rd</sup> party economic impact study
- BIL/IRA assessment
- Energy Transition Act plan



# What we've heard thus far: Environmental Community

- Significant need to address legacy of fossil fuels (**orphan wells**, mine site reclamation) and energy (uranium mine sites)
- Strong desire for clean energy industries like **solar**
- Need for environmentally-focused workforce and associated training, internship opportunities
- Broad need for **capacity** to organize project teams and efforts
- Community center infrastructure needs to assist in communication and organization of community environmental concerns
- Need for information related to mine/plant site repurposing opportunities
  - how can we influence these plans?

## Info Pull

San Juan Citizens Alliance  
-regional orphan well issues

Western Environmental Law Center  
-connection to tribal/non-tribal NGOs

Just Energy Transition Team  
-questions on community benefit plans/agreements

New Mexico Env. Dept.  
-broad workforce need

Grand Canyon Trust  
-community infrastructure

# Remaining Agenda



<b>Noah Eckert</b>	DE Shaw	Perspectives on Regional Solar Initiatives
<b>Arvin Trujillo</b>	Navajo Nation Advisor and Former CEO of Four Corners Economic Development	Four Corners Region Needs from a Tribal, Non-tribal Community Perspective
<b>Mike Stark</b>	San Juan County Manager	Update on the DOT BUILD Grant for a Regional Rail Spur
<b>Waldy C. Salazar</b>	New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions	San Juan Generating Station Displaced Worker Development Plan
<b>Mackinzi Taylor</b>	Project Manager for Community Builders	Building Resilient Economies in Coal Communities Action Awards
<b>Heidi Byrd</b>	New Mexico, Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth (OICG)	Four Corners Broadband Investments  Four Corners Community Environmental Perspective
<b>Mark Pearson</b>	Executive Director for San Juan Citizens Alliance	
<b>Rose Rushing</b>	Attorney for the Western Environmental Law Center	
<b>Mogan Rodman</b>	Executive Director for the White House Council on Native American Affairs	DOE/DOI/Navajo Nation MOU and Initial Outcomes



**Noah Eckert**  
*Project Manager for DESRI*



**Arvin Trujillo**

*Senior Energy, Strategic Planning and Economic Development  
Advisor and Executive Administrator to Navajo Nation President Buu  
Nygren*



**Mike Stark**  
*San Juan County (NM) Manager*

# Freight Rail Line Feasibility Study San Juan County, New Mexico

“Opening the doors of economic opportunity”



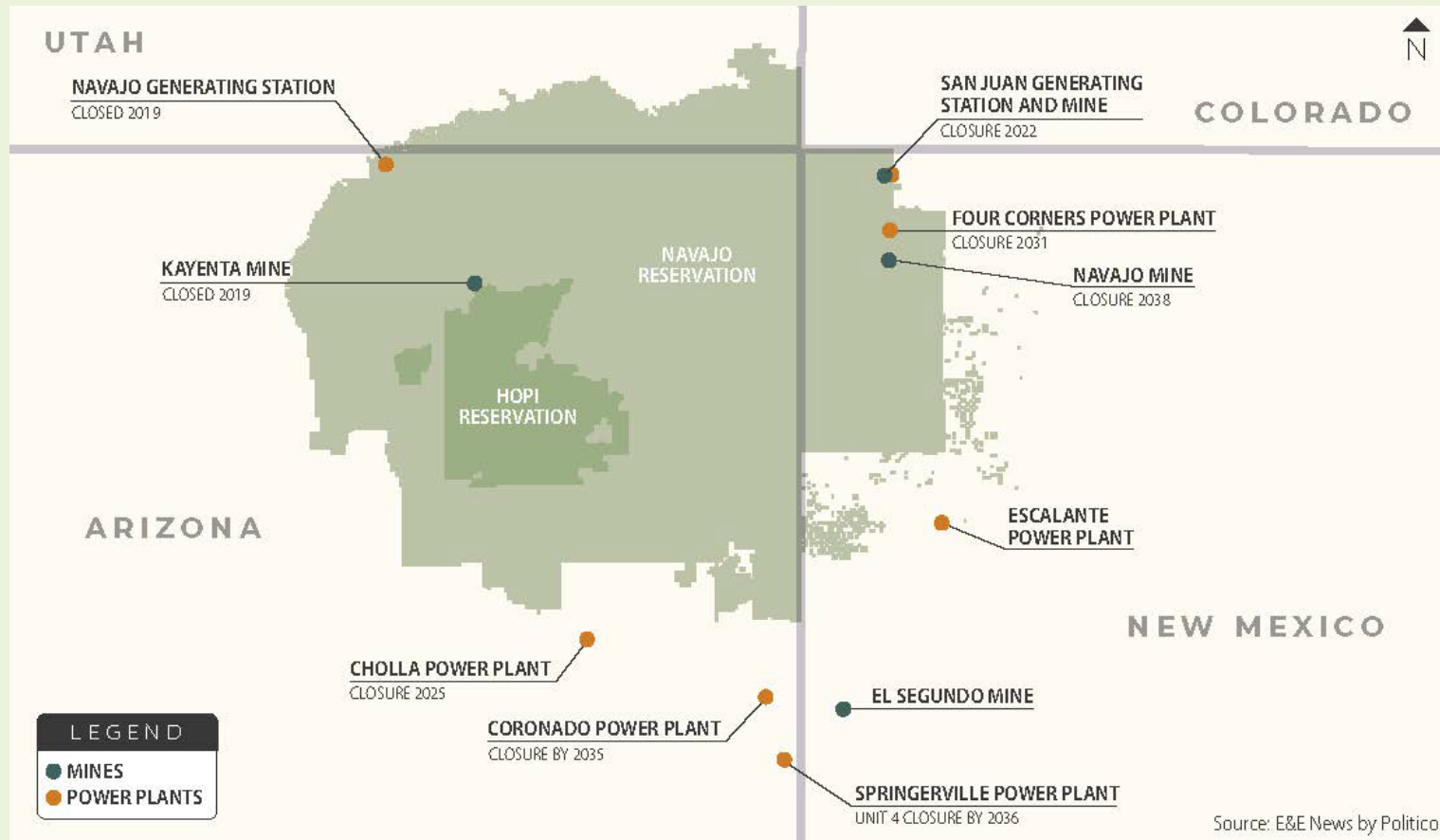
4 Corners Freight

Feasibility Study

# Why is this so important?

## ■ High Systemic Poverty (Pre-Covid Statistics)

- Poverty is 4 times the national mean.
- Median Household income of \$20,000 and National Poverty Level is \$27,500.
- Per capita income of \$7,269.
- More than 75% of Navajo school age children live in poverty.
- Unemployment rate 70%.



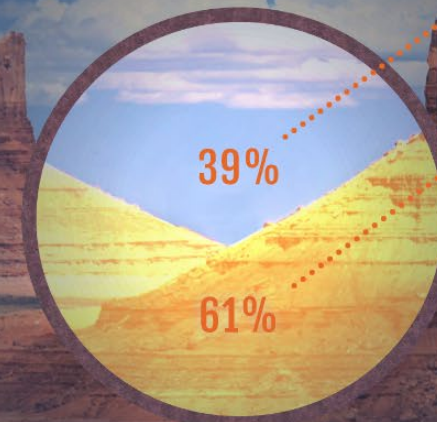
Article Link: [The Navajo, circled by coal, see jobs vanish as CO2 falls - E&E News by POLITICO \(eenews.net\)](https://www.eenews.net/stories/0700010001)

# Statistics From the Navajo Transitional Energy Company (NTEC)

## ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION TO THE NAVAJO NATION

NTEC has continued to grow its total economic and financial contribution to the Navajo Nation. As detailed below, NTEC's total economic contribution to the Navajo Nation in 2021 exceeded \$124 million. This annual contribution is comprised of the taxes and royalties paid by NTEC and the Navajo Mine as well as the overall payroll to employees on the Nation, contracts with qualified Navajo contractors, and charitable contributions.

## NAVAJO NATION GENERAL FUND



NTEC & FCPP: \$62,212,000

OTHER: \$96,051,000

The Navajo Mine and Four Corners Power Plant contributed more than \$62 million this year to the Navajo Nation General Fund, comprising nearly 40 percent of the Fund's \$158 million budget.

SUPPORT	TOTAL NTEC AMOUNT*	NAVAJO MINE	FOUR CORNERS POWER PLANT
Taxes & Royalties	\$49,181,000	\$48,200,000	\$14,012,000
Employment Wages	\$58,445,000	\$55,444,000	\$42,871,000
Navajo Vendors	\$8,019,000	\$5,124,000	\$41,354,000
Navajo Sales Tax	\$4,721,000		
Helium Taxes & Royalties	\$1,000,000		
Community Benefit Fund	\$250,000		
Scholarships, Education & Other Community Giving	\$192,000		
CHRP	\$2,500,000		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$124,308,000</b>		

NATION MEMBER EMPLOYEES BY SITE	
<b>318 OF 370</b>	<b>230 OF 268</b>

A combined 86% of employees at Navajo Mine (left) and Four Corners Power Plant (right) are members of the Navajo Nation.

\*Total NTEC amount includes value of NTEC's seven-percent ownership of FCPP.



# Other important considerations?

- Has no commercial transportation in the four corners area.
- One of the largest Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) nationwide with no freight rail line.
- The only MSA in the state without freight rail line, interstate and commercial air.




## Anticipated/Expected Project Benefits

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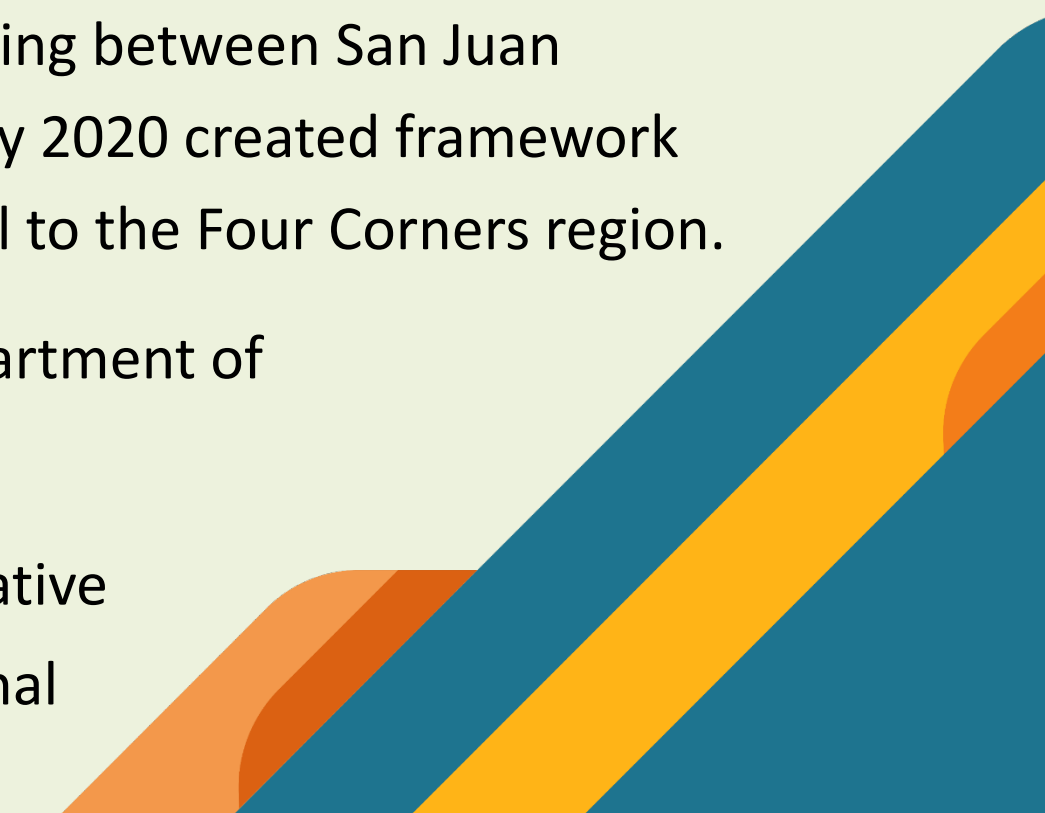
The new connection to the BNSF freight rail network, one of the largest freight railroads in North America, will improve the efficiency of the overall freight transportation system in the Four Corners region. It will also expand economic opportunities for the region, including the Navajo Nation.

# Anticipated/Expected Project Benefits

- The project will provide an attractive resource for businesses considering locating to or expanding in the Four Corners region.
  - A freight rail connection to the Four Corners region would reduce the cost of shipping goods to and from the Four Corners region. The project supports the efficient movement of freight and people by making connections to the existing BNSF freight network. It also makes the region competitive by decreasing shipping costs.
  - The project will reduce the amount of freight traffic on U.S. 491, U.S. 550 and other regional collector and local roads thus decreasing the potential for accidents and providing a less congested and safer transportation system.
  - Reduction of truck traffic on these roads furthers the goals of stretching road construction and maintenance expenditures.
  - Moving freight by rail rather than trucks reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 75%.
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# Project Breakthroughs

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- Rail feasibility studied repeatedly over past 50 years- project never moved forward due to lack of key partnerships and funding, which are now in place.
  - Historic memorandum of understanding between San Juan County and Navajo Nation in February 2020 created framework for collective cooperation to bring rail to the Four Corners region.
  - Project funded via \$2 million US Department of Transportation “BUILD” grant.
  - Support from San Juan County Legislative Delegation, Four Corners Congressional Delegation and the NMDOT.
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# Navajo Nation Involvement

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- In February of 2020, San Juan County and the Navajo Nation signed a Memorandum of Understanding.
- The MOU established a framework for cooperation for future railway, community, and business development in the Four Corners region.



# Funding Source: U.S. DoT's BUILD Transportation Grant

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United States Department of Transportation  
Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage  
Development Transportation Grant

The FY 2019 BUILD program will give special consideration to projects which emphasize improved access to reliable, safe, and affordable transportation for communities in rural areas, such as projects that improve infrastructure condition, address public health and safety, promote regional connectivity or facilitate economic growth or competitiveness



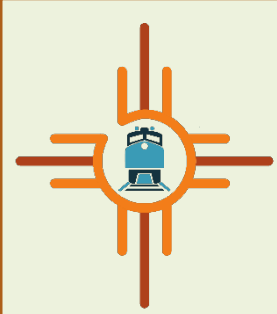


# Grant Award

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San Juan County was awarded a BUILD Grant to support a pre-NEPA project development and alternatives analysis study for a proposed new rail line between San Juan County and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) national freight network along the Interstate 40 corridor.

The project will involve connecting the BNSF rail line near Gallup, New Mexico.



# About The Project

The new connection to the BNSF freight rail network will improve the efficiency of the overall freight transportation system in the Four Corners region. It will also expand economic opportunities for the region, including the Navajo Nation. By adding this connection to the existing BNSF freight network, the area will become an attractive resource for businesses considering locating to or expanding in the Four Corners Region. It would help make the region more competitive by decreasing shipping costs.

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# Request For Proposal: Issued by San Juan County, New Mexico

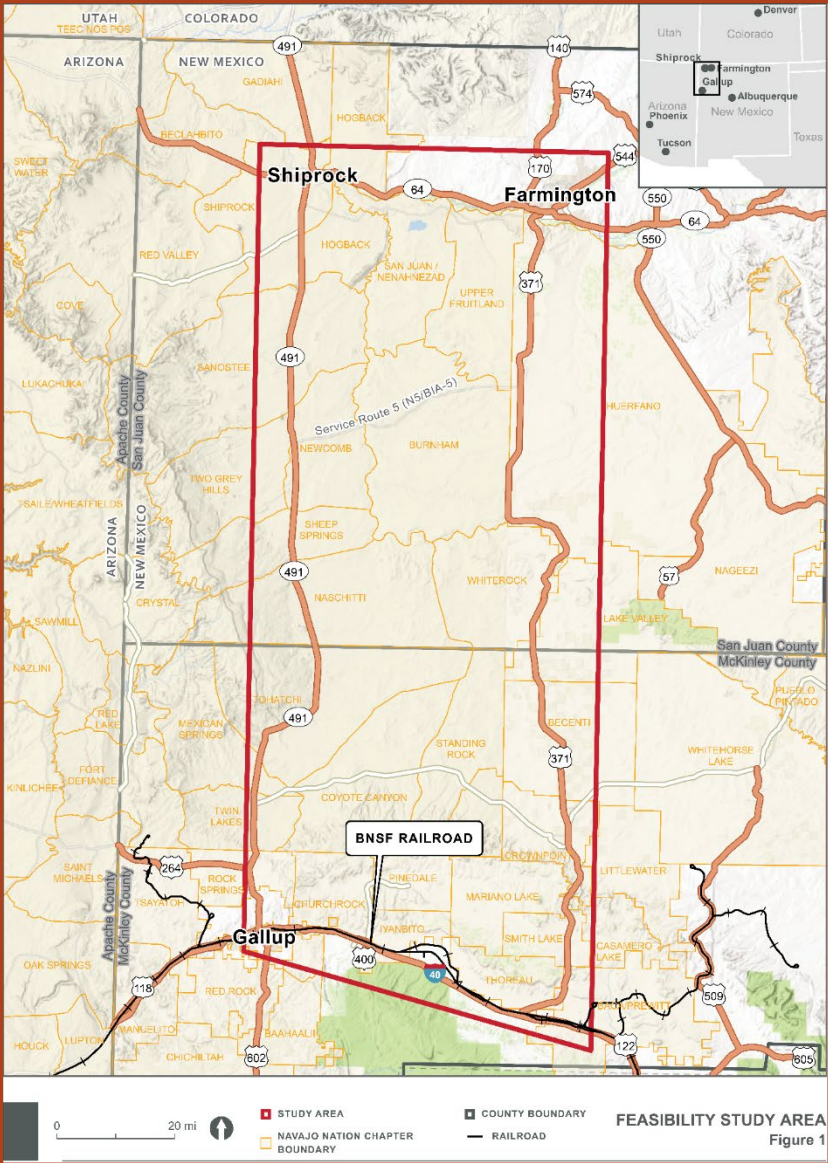
- Evaluation and identification of potential route alignments, transloading facilities and necessary rights-of-way.
- Integration of railroad project development and the Federal environmental process.
- Public involvement and agency coordination.
- Freight forecasting and benefit cost analysis.
- Railroad operations and simulation, per Federal Railroad Administration requirements.
- Contract awarded to HDR Engineering, Inc., Omaha, NE.

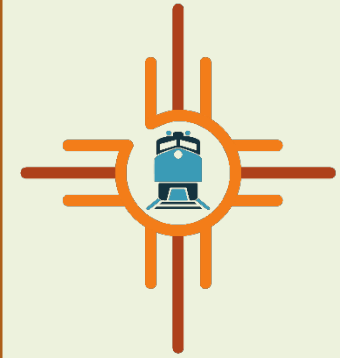
# Project Overview

Despite 140,000 route miles, the U.S. freight rail network does not currently serve San Juan County, the Navajo Nation or the greater Four Corners region. This proposed project would see construction of a rail spur and related facilities along U.S. 491 through the Navajo Nation connecting the I-40 corridor freight rail system operated by Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) comprising approximately 100 miles.

This proposed project would see construction of a rail spur and related facilities along U.S. 491/U.S. 371 through the Navajo Nation connecting the I-40 corridor freight rail system operated by Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) comprising approximately 100 miles

This study will develop activities and alternatives for a proposed new rail line between San Juan County near Shiprock with a connection to the BNSF Railway near Gallup.





# Why Freight Rail?

- About 40% of U.S. freight is shipped by railway, more than any other mode of transportation<sup>1</sup>
- Rail accounts for only **2.1%** of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions<sup>2</sup>. In contrast, idling trucks contribute approximately 20% of annual U.S. carbon emissions.
- Railroads are the most fuel-efficient way to move freight over land, moving an average of one ton of freight more than 480 miles per gallon
- On average, railroads are three to four times more fuel-efficient than trucks. A single freight train can carry the freight of several hundred trucks<sup>3</sup>
- Moving freight by rail rather than trucks lowers greenhouse gas emissions by up to **75%**
- If 50% of truck traffic moving at least 750 miles went by rail instead, GHGs would fall by ~26.2 million tons

<sup>1</sup>- FHWA, Freight Analysis Framework, Version 4.5.1, <sup>2</sup>- U.S. EPA data, <sup>3</sup>- Texas Highway Transportation Institute's 2019 Urban Mobility Report  
Source- Association of American Railroads

# What Is A Feasibility Study?



During the feasibility study, the project team will identify and evaluate potential route alignments, transloading facilities and rights-of-way. Environmental impacts will be studied, as well the integration of railroad project development.



# Detailed Work Plan Tasks

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- TASK 1: Detailed Project Work Plan, Budget and Schedule
- TASK 2: Preliminary Purpose & Need and Public Involvement/Agency Coordination Plan
  - SUBTASK 2.1: Preliminary Purpose & Need Statement
  - SUBTASK 2.2: Public Involvement/Agency Coordination and Communication Plan
  - SUBTASK 2.3: Freight Demand Forecast
- TASK 3: Alternatives Analysis
  - SUBTASK 3.1: Route Options Analysis
  - SUBTASK 3.2: Investment Options Analysis
  - SUBTASK 3.3: Design Options Analysis
- TASK 4: Project Development
  - SUBTASK 4.1: Specification of Detailed Operation Requirements and Data Collection
  - SUBTASK 4.2: Operations Analysis
  - SUBTASK 4.3: Support Facilities and Access Analysis
  - SUBTASK 4.4: Conceptual and Early Preliminary Engineering
  - SUBTASK 4.5: Capital Cost Estimation
  - SUBTASK 4.6: Operations & Maintenance Cost Estimation
- TASK 5: Environmental Analysis
- TASK 6: Economic Feasibility Analysis

# Federal Railroad Administration's Process



May  
2022

Detailed Project Work Plan, Budget and Schedule

Preliminary Purpose & Need and Public Involvement/ Agency Coordination Plan

- Preliminary Purpose & Need Statement
- Public Involvement/ Agency Coordination Plan
- Freight Demand Forecast

Alternatives Analysis

- Route Options Analysis
- Investment Options Analysis
- Design Options Analysis

Project Development

- Specification of Detailed Operation Requirements and Data Collection
- Operations Analysis
- Support Facilities and Access Analysis
- Conceptual and Early Preliminary Engineering
- Capital Cost Estimation
- Operations & Maintenance Cost Estimation

June 2023

Environmental Analysis

Complete:  
October  
2024

Economic Feasibility Analysis



# Public Involvement/ Agency Coordination

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- Subcontract with Al Henderson, AHEC and Tom Chee, Consultant
- Identify 32 chapters that will likely be impacted by the project and obtain resolutions
- Contact each chapter for a consultation
- Conduct a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis
- Present to Navajo Nation elected leaders, NNC committees, departments, agencies and other interested parties

## Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study

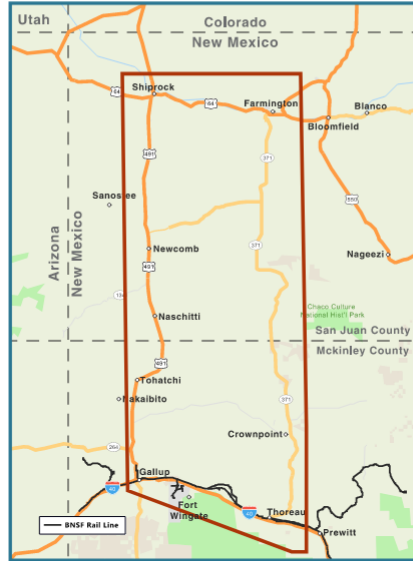


### YOU'RE INVITED!

#### Public Information Meetings on the Four Corners Feasibility Study – September 13-14, 2022

San Juan County, the Navajo Nation, and the Federal Railroad Administration are studying the economic feasibility of freight rail service to the Four Corners region. The addition of this service would not only add freight rail to the region but could also potentially reduce commercial traffic, decrease the potential for traffic accidents, and open up the doors of economic opportunity to the region.

The Four Corners Freight Rail Study Team will be holding Public Information meetings to introduce the study to the community and share information on what the project benefits are, the funding and the study timeline.



#### Public Information Meetings

**Tuesday, September 13, 4-7 p.m.**  
Phil L. Thomas Performing Arts Center  
US Highway 64  
Shiprock, NM 87420

**Wednesday, September 14, 4-7 p.m.**  
Farmington Civic Center  
200 W. Arrington St.  
Farmington, NM 87401



Persons with disabilities should contact Mike Stark at (505) 334-4271 to arrange for assistance. Individuals who require auxiliary aids or a translator for non-English speaking residents for this meeting should contact San Juan County at least two days before the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

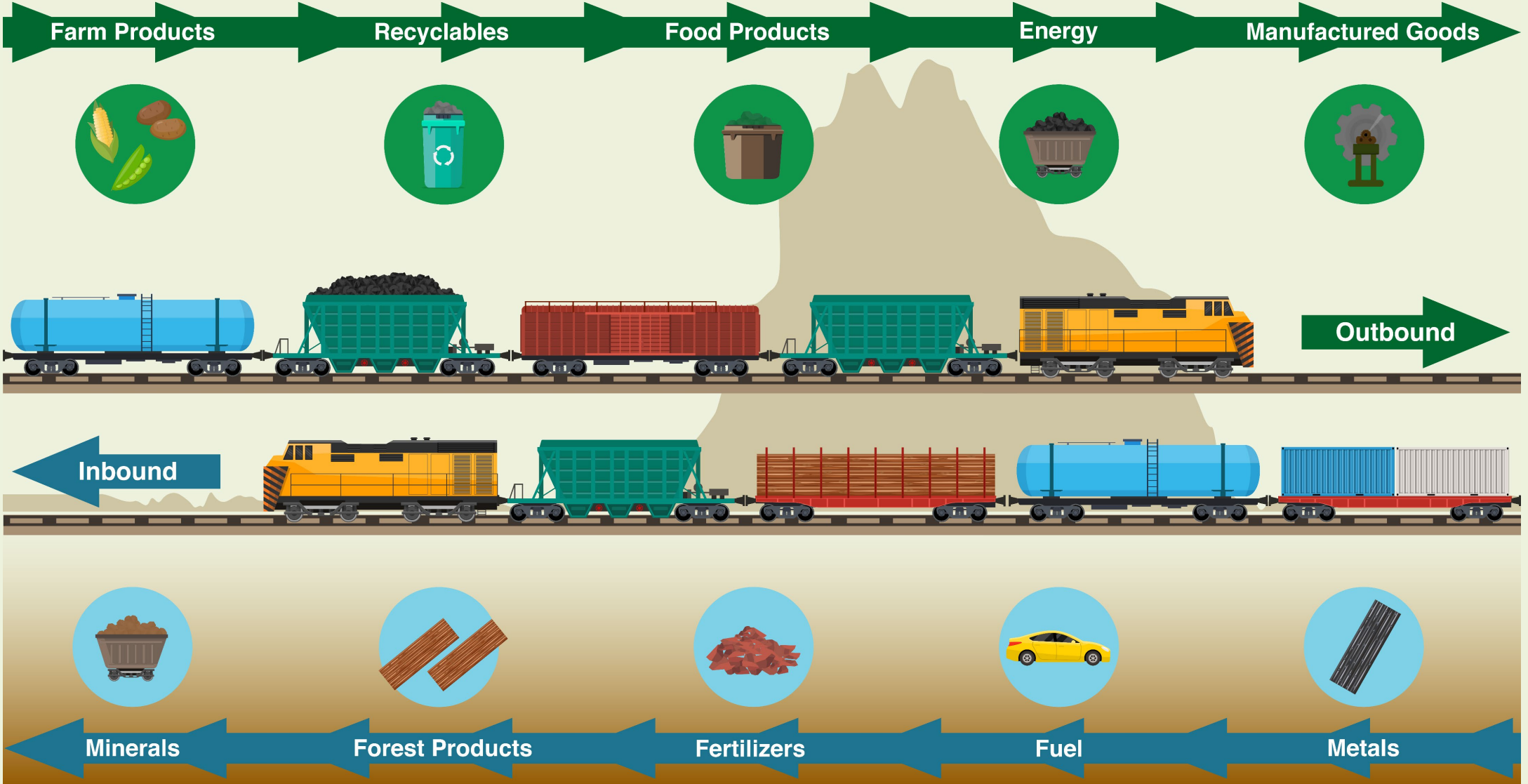
Learn more at: [www.4cornersfreightrail.com](http://www.4cornersfreightrail.com)

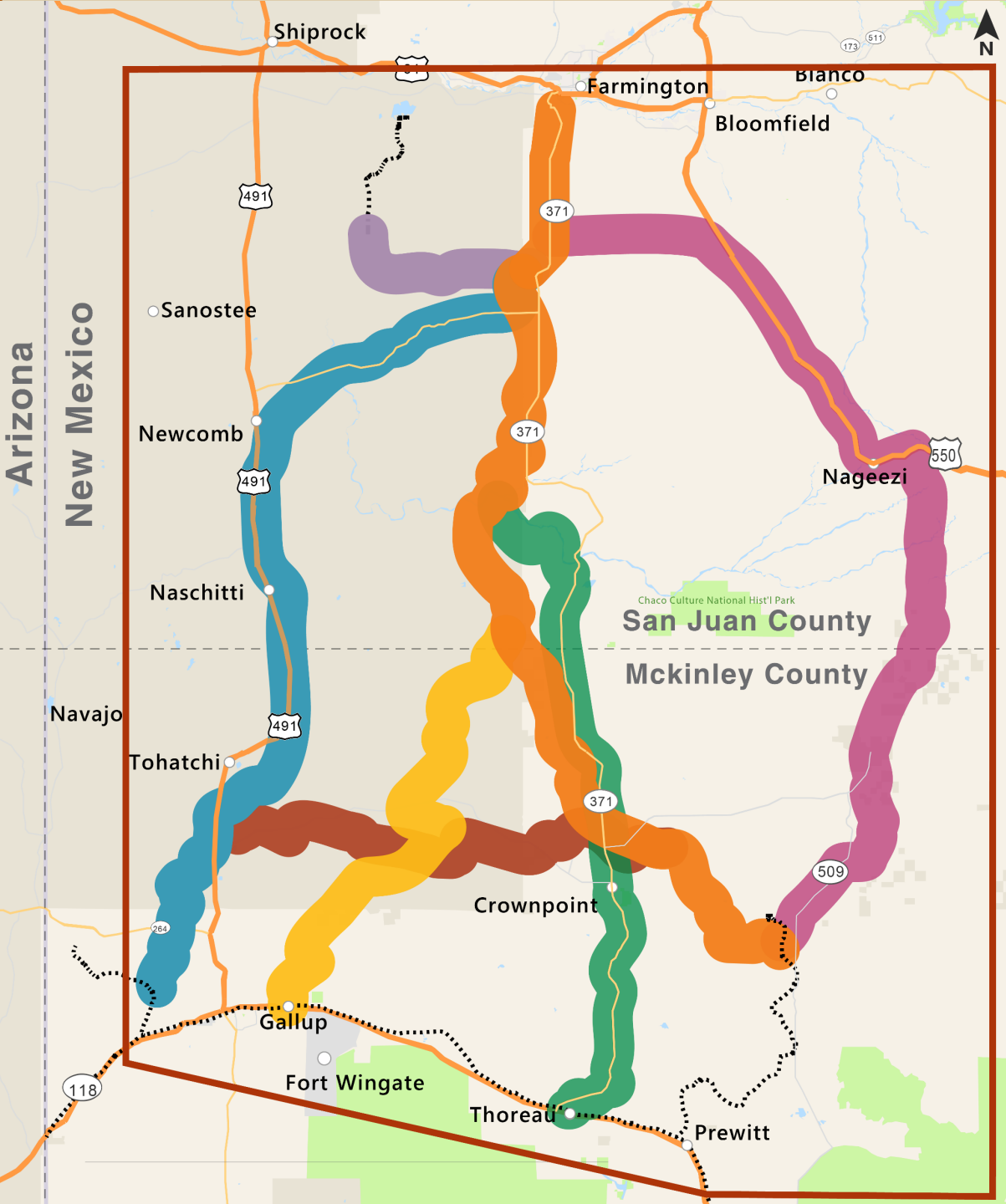
# Public Information Meetings

- Two Public Information Meetings Held in September of 2022.
  - Sept 13<sup>th</sup> in Shiprock
  - Sept 14<sup>th</sup> Farmington
- Two more Public Information Meetings Held in June of 2023.
  - June 21<sup>st</sup> in Newcomb
  - June 22<sup>nd</sup> in Crownpoint
- Meetings were to inform the public about the project and receive feedback on prospective routes and import/export opportunities.











# Potential Goods Shipped By Rail

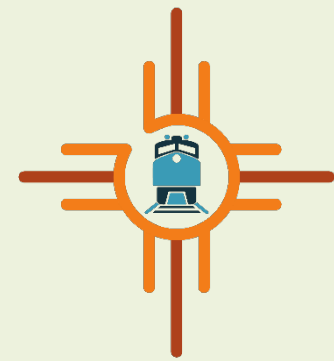




# Recommended Alignment Routes

**Four Corners Freight Rail Study - Conceptual Route Options**

	<b>Defiance</b>		<b>El Segundo</b>
	<b>Gallup</b>		<b>Star Lake</b>
	<b>Thoreau</b>		<b>East West Connector</b>
	<b>Navajo Mine Connection</b>		<b>Existing Rail Line</b>



## Tell us what you think & stay connected

- Take a moment to share your thoughts
- Sign up to receive study updates



Fill out a comment card, or just leave us your email address. We'll add you to our contact list and ensure you get the latest updates and information about the Four Corners Freight Rail Line Feasibility Study.

Visit the website: **4CornersFreightRail.com**



**info@4cornersfreightrail.com**



**Waldy Salazar**

*Division Director for the New Mexico  
Department of Workforce Solutions*

# Energy Transition Act Update

July 2023

Waldy Salazar

[Waldy.Salazar@dws.nm.gov](mailto:Waldy.Salazar@dws.nm.gov)



# ETA Displaced Worker Assistance

- Conducted multiple Rapid Response sessions and provide Job Search Assistance
- Worked with the employers to create a standardized process for Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims that does not require multiple verifications of the severance package, and make UI more accessible
- Created a “bridge program” to serve workers between the date of layoff and the next step in their career path
- Providing direct assistance to workers using ETA funds

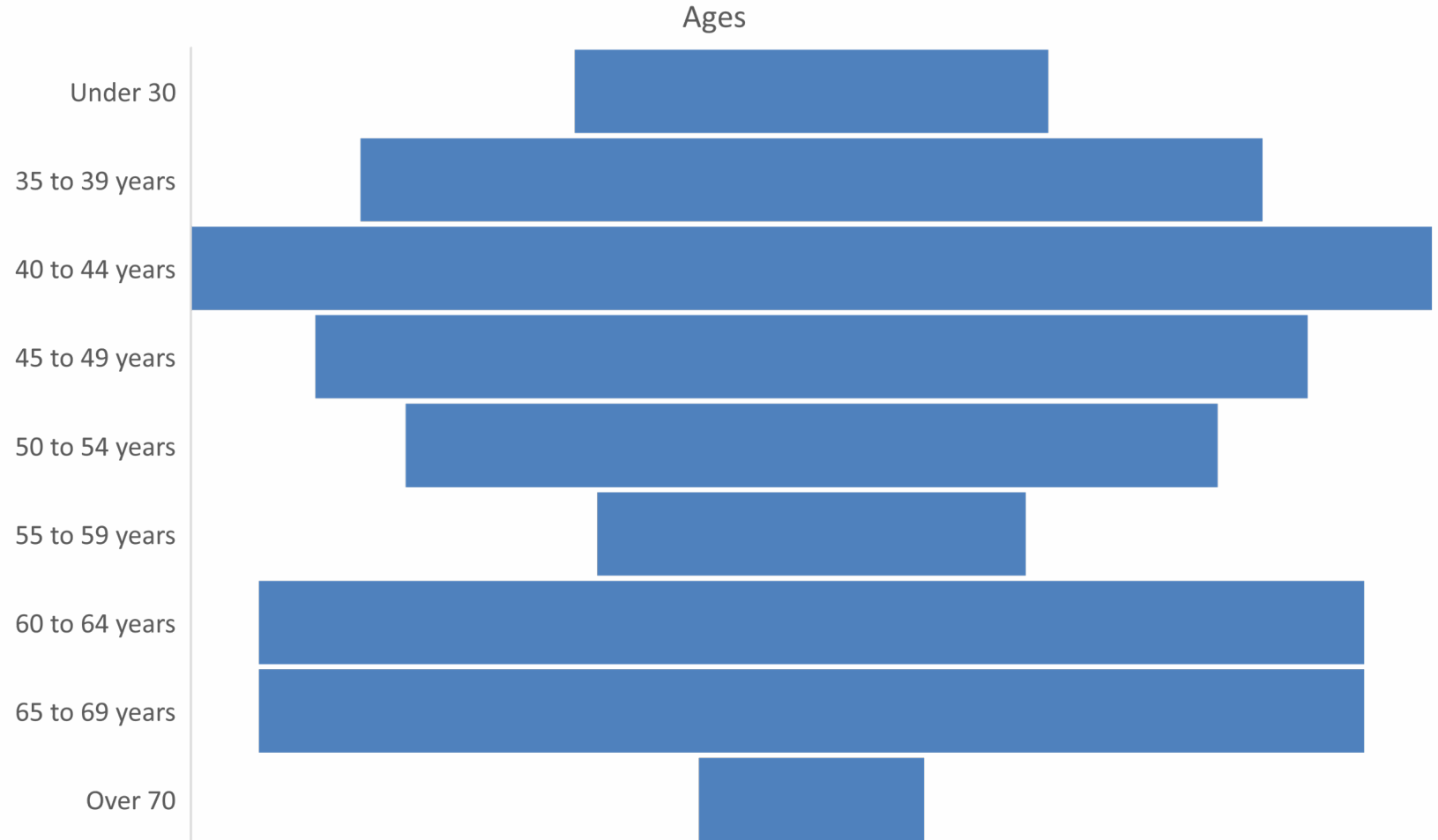
# ETA Payments To Date

## Phase 1 Direct Assistance

- \$20,000 one-time, taxable payment
- All workers eligible if they are NM residents or were at time of layoff – no restrictions based on re-employment, retirement or severance
- Met one-on-one with all applicants and offered educational and other resources
- Payments delivered starting the week of May 23rd
- 404 applications approved, 354 checks delivered as of 7/13/23
- Estimated Round 1 total expenditure: \$8.5 million + \$1.1 million reserve

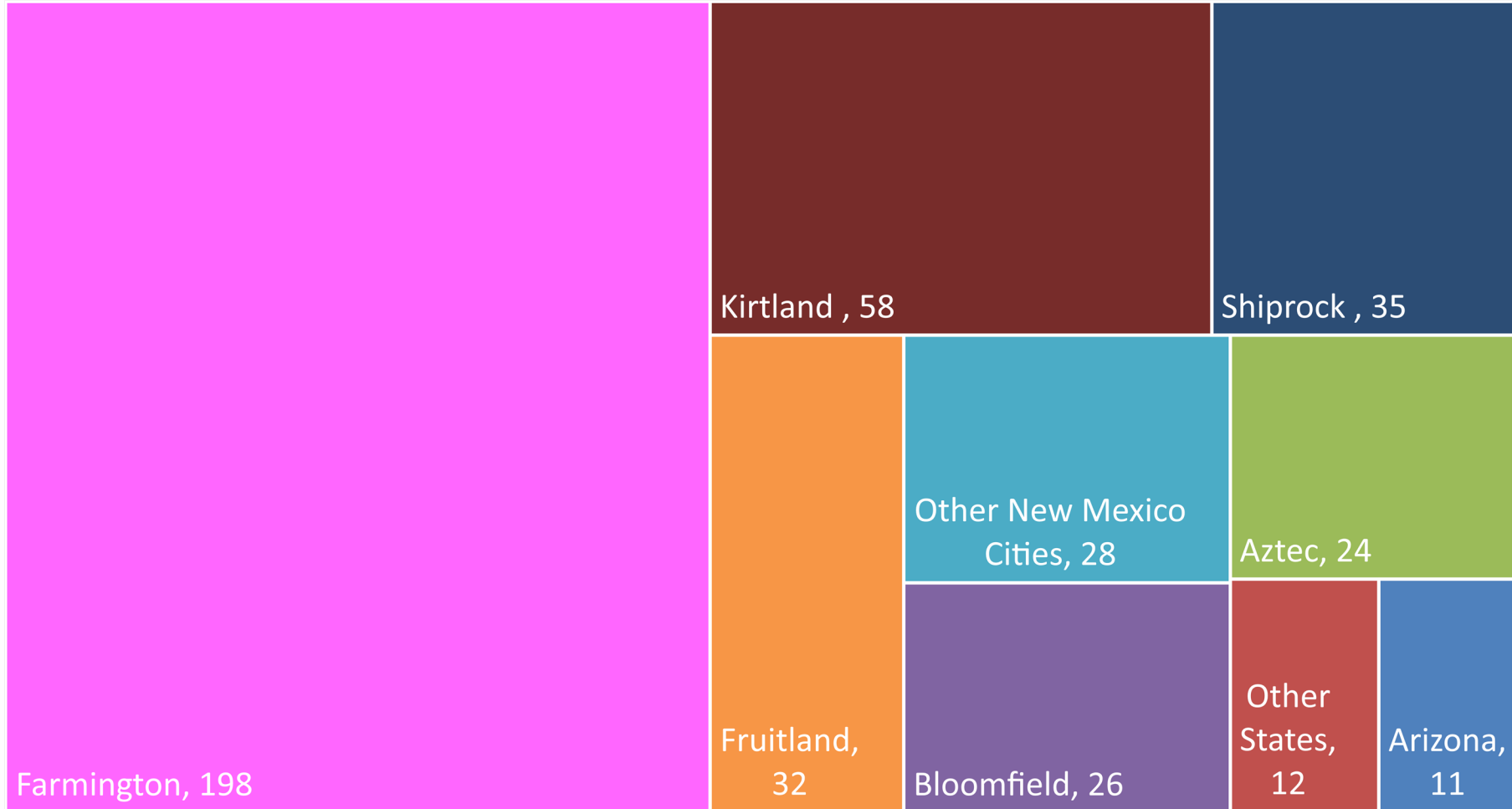
# Displaced Worker Demographics

- 89% male
- 43% Native American
  - 95% Navajo
- 50% union members
- 31% retired





# Current Location

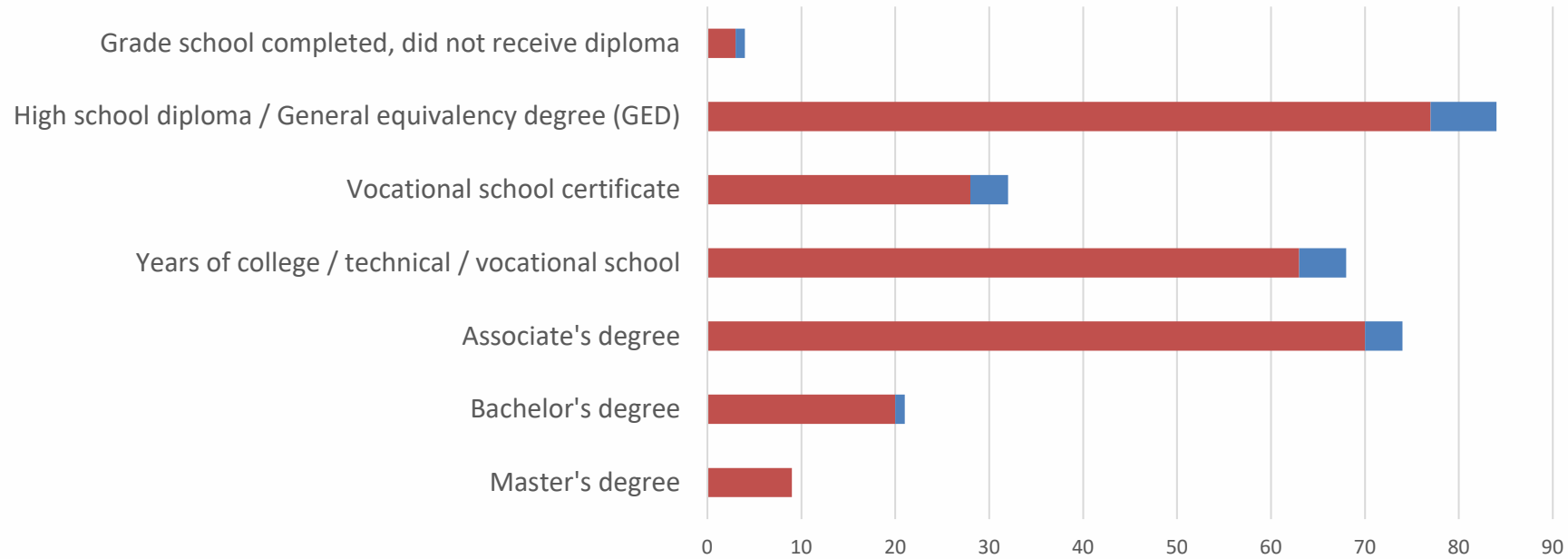


94% live in San Juan County

Other States:  
CA, CO, CT,  
LA, SC, UT, WY

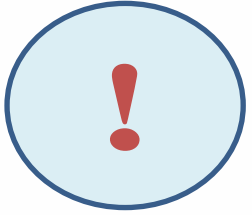
# Education Levels

Educational Attainment, Not Retired



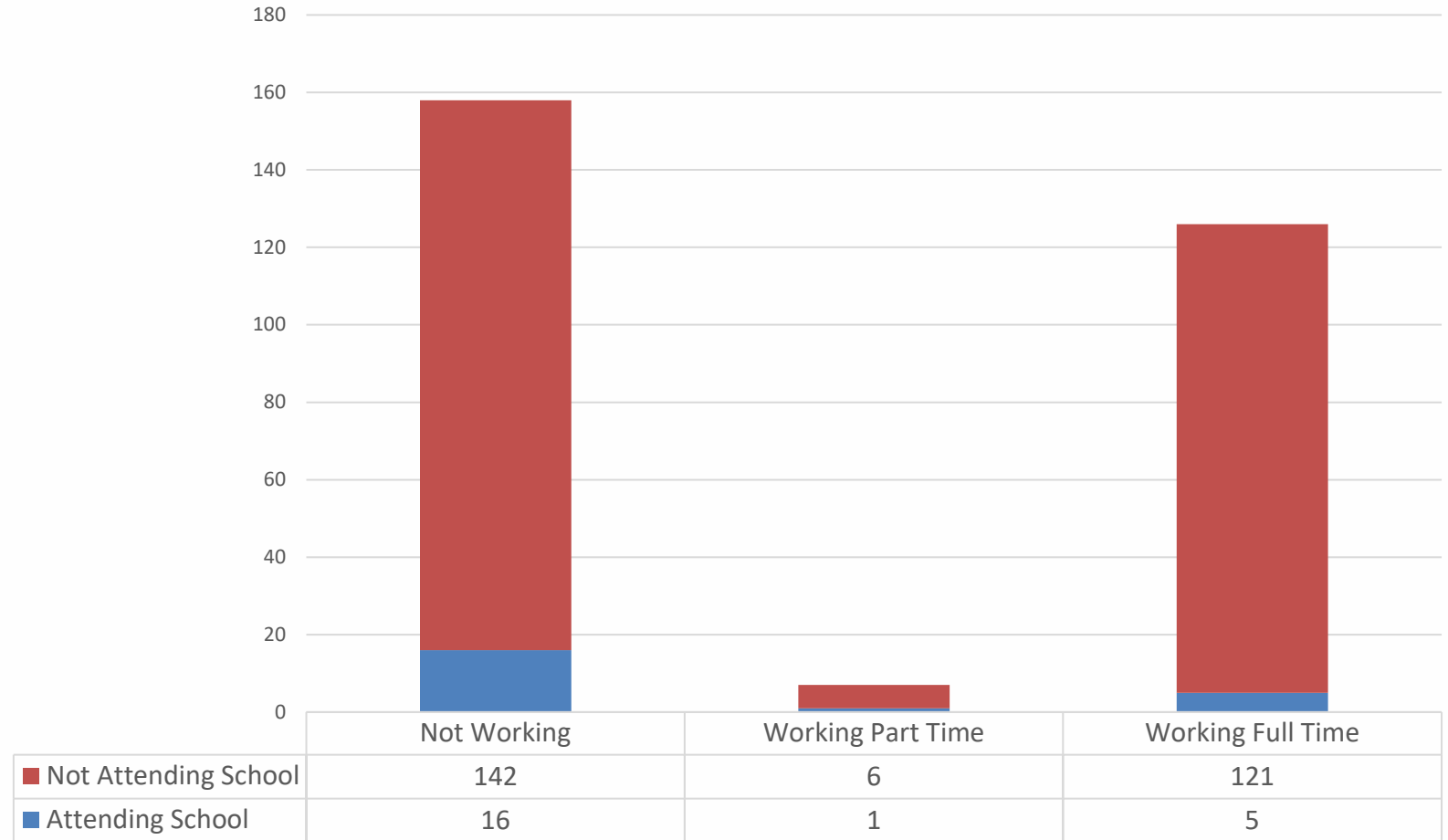
	Master's degree	Bachelor's degree	Associate's degree	Years of college / technical / vocational school	Vocational school certificate	High school diploma / General equivalency degree (GED)	Grade school completed, did not receive diploma
■ Not in school	9	20	70	63	28	77	3
■ In School	0	1	4	5	4	7	1

# Work and School



**176**  
individuals  
expressed  
interest in  
training  
assistance

Employment and School Status, Not Retired

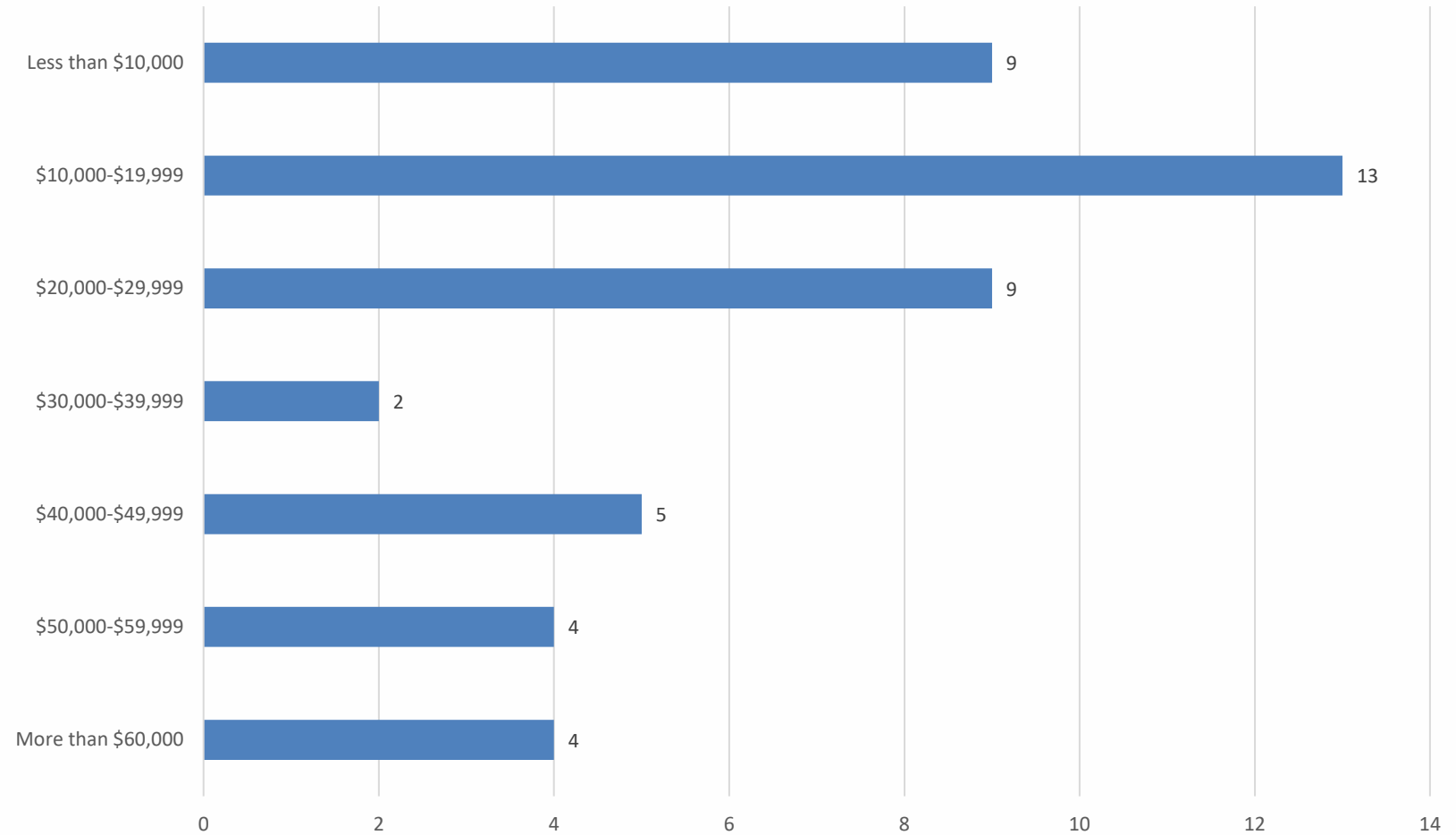


# Wage Differentials

Average Annual Wage Differential for People Re-employed F/T and who reported making less since layoff:  
**\$27,612**

**19** Workers report making the same or more than they made before the layoffs

Wage Differential for Workers Reporting Full-Time Work with Lower Wages



# Next Steps

## Now through August

- Continue to distribute checks and complete Round 1
- Coordinate with EDD and IAD on jobs to be created with their funds
- Develop proposal for additional uses of funds
- ETA Community Advisory Committee meeting

## August through December

- Implement plans for additional funding
- Continue collaboration for additional funding



**Mackinzi Taylor**  
*Project Manager for Community Builders*



# The BRECC Action Challenge

Building Community Resilience

## 4-Corners Rapid Response Community Update



# BRECC OVERVIEW



U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION



BUILDING RESILIENT  
ECONOMIES *in*  
COAL COMMUNITIES

**Building Resilient Economies in Coal Communities (BRECC) is an Economic Development Administration (EDA) Community of Practice.**



# BRECC OVERVIEW



U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION



BUILDING RESILIENT  
ECONOMIES *in*  
COAL COMMUNITIES

**Building Resilient Economies in Coal Communities (BRECC) is an Economic Development Administration (EDA) Community of Practice.**

## BRECC Partners:

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**community  
builders**

**ENTREWORKS**  
CONSULTING



# BRECC COMPONENTS



## **BRECC National Network**

Open forum and peer network for coal community stakeholders

## **Commitment *Coalition***

Leadership and peer-learning network

## **Action Challenge**

Technical assistance and capacity-building cohorts

## **Storytelling**

National campaign to capture educational and inspirational stories of coal communities



# ACTION CHALLENGE OVERVIEW

~~A technical~~ assistance  
and capacity-building  
community program

## Participants

Team-based technical assistance for  
coal communities in need

## Activities

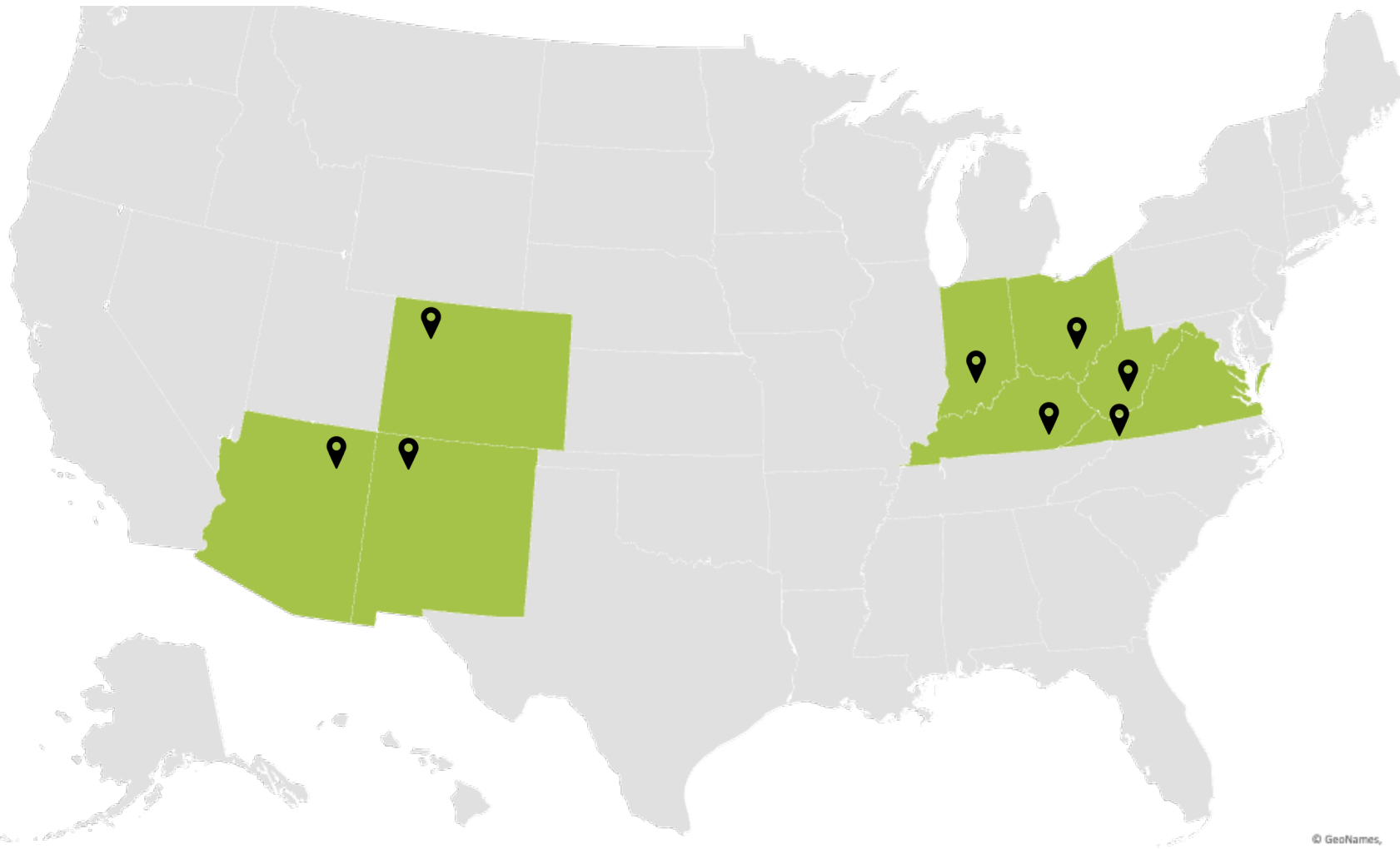
- Tailored coaching
- 12 month support process
- Create economic diversification and community revitalization plan
- In-person capstone event

## Goal

Create and advance fundable economic revitalization  
and diversification projects

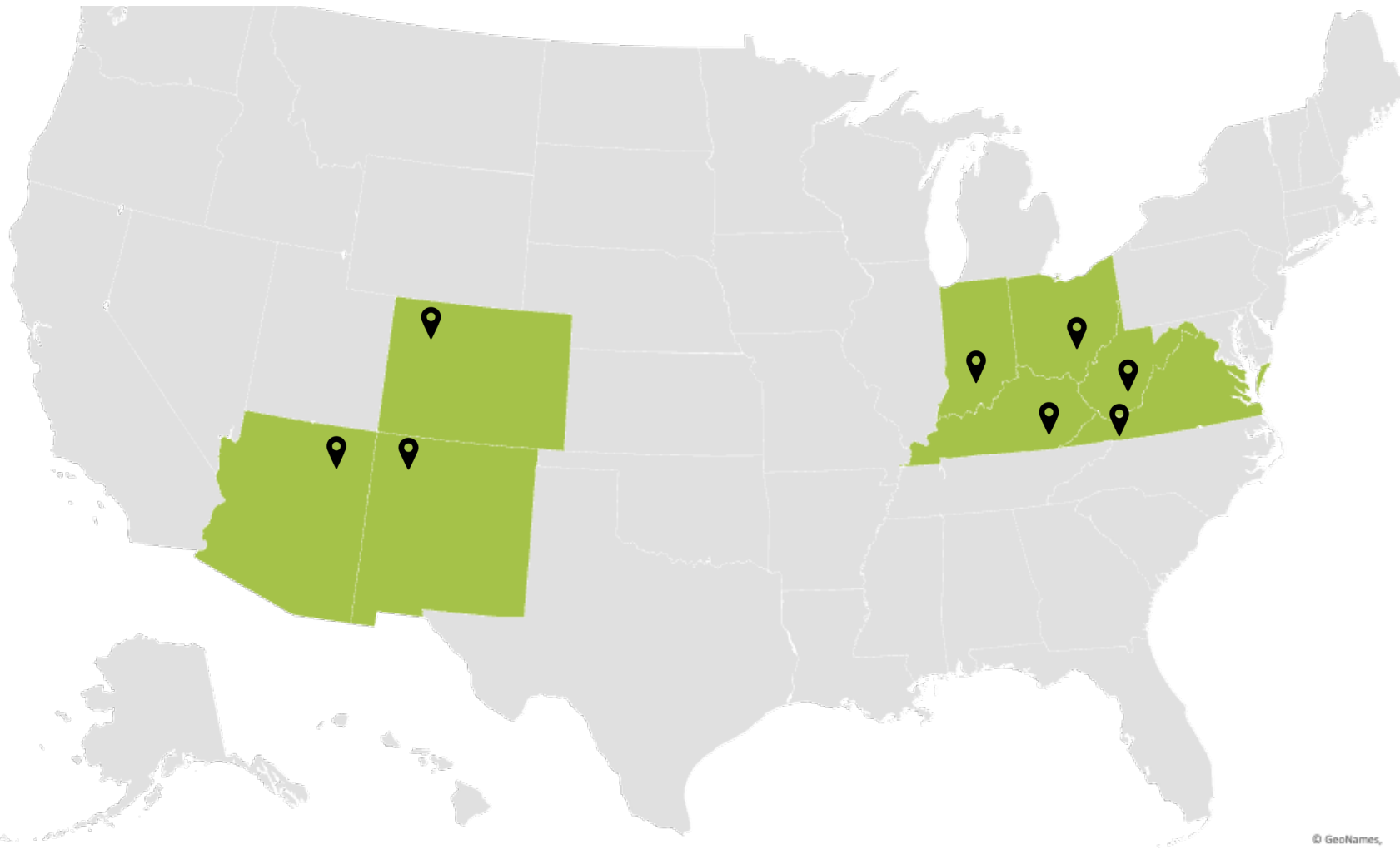


# ACTION CHALLENGE COMMUNITIES



1. **City of Richwood, West Virginia**
2. **Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission, Virginia**
3. **Floyd County, Kentucky**
4. **Northern Arizona Counties**
5. **Northwest Colorado Counties**
6. **Perry County, Ohio**
7. **Pike County, Indiana**
8. **San Juan County, New Mexico**

# ACTION CHALLENGE COMMUNITIES



1. City of Richwood, West Virginia
2. Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission, Virginia
3. Floyd County, Kentucky
4. Northern Arizona Counties
5. Northwest Colorado Counties
6. Perry County, Ohio
7. Pike County, Indiana
8. San Juan County, New Mexico

# COMMUNITY COACHING APPROACH

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A technical assistance  
and capacity-building  
community program

**STRATEGIC:** Communities desire plans that support locally tailored, meaningful impact project and program investments.

**INTENTIONAL:** Communities are eager to learn about success stories and to align projects with funding opportunities.

**PRACTICAL:** With limited capacity to pursue and administer grants, communities seek help matching to best fit opportunities.



# ABOUT COMMUNITY BUILDERS



**community  
builders**

PEOPLE | PLACE | PROSPERITY

Let's make communities more livable - for everyone.





## Our Approach

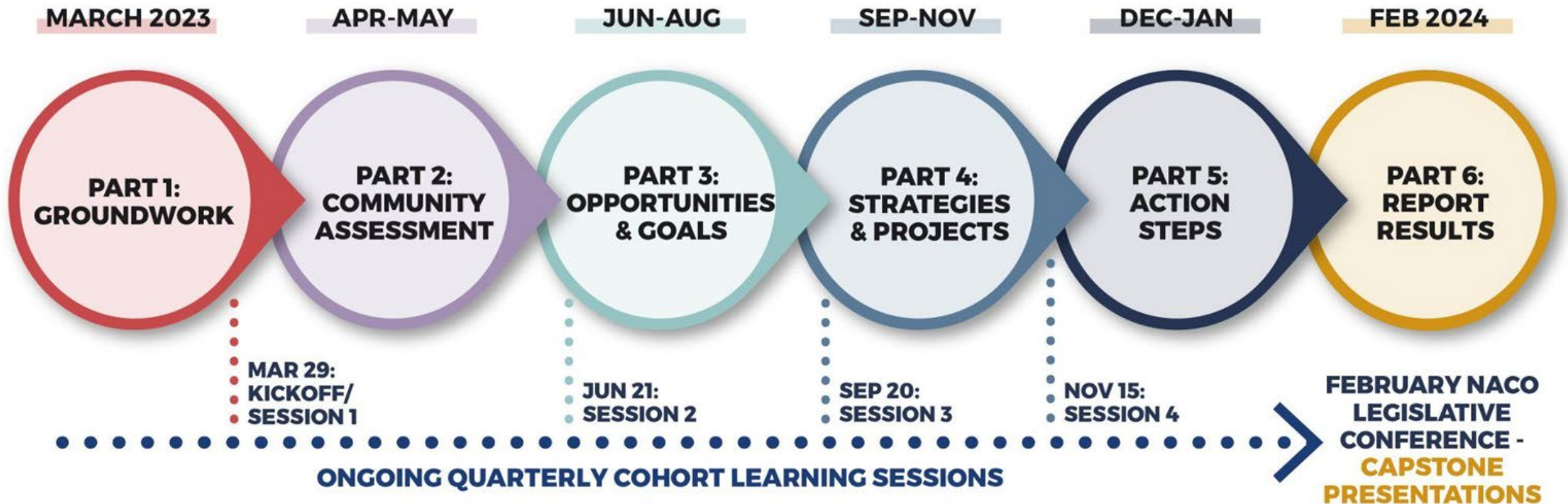
We empower communities and local leaders with tools, information and support to create more livable places.

We work shoulder to shoulder with community partners to craft practical solutions that fit their specific challenges and opportunities.

We build civic capacity so communities are better equipped to plan for growth, shape inclusive and resilient economies, and expand housing choices and affordability.



# PLANNING PROCESS



# PLANNING PROCESS



# PROGRESS TO-DATE

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Where are we now?

## Completed:

1. Customized **scopes** to focus each team's efforts for the year-long process.
2. Completed **community assessment** with the following deliverables:
  - a. Regional **Policy Scan**
  - b. **Data Collection & Review**
3. Initial inventory of existing **local initiatives**
4. Site visits & in-person team worksessions

## In-Progress:

1. Articulating local **coal transition goals and high-level strategies**
2. Identifying aligned **funding opportunities**



# PROGRESS TO-DATE

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Where are we going?

## Key Outcomes:

- **Tools to evaluate projects & initiatives** and their alignment with existing policies, goals, and identified prioritization criteria
- A clear **pathway from priority initiatives to available funding & support opportunities**
- **Tools to successfully pursue funding opportunities**, including data, infographics, and communications materials



# BRECC TEAM TRIP RECAP

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Key takeaways  
and outcomes



# San Juan County Communities Visited



- Aztec
- Bloomfield
- Farmington
- Kirtland
- Unincorporated San Juan County



# San Juan County Visit Key Takeaways

- Farmington is regionally dominant
- Exceptional quality civic assets
- San Juan Community College serves as a strong ED and workforce partner
- Limitless outdoor recreation potential
- Varied energy development potential
- Solid momentum on placemaking
- Ripe potential in health, education, energy, tourism



# San Juan County Visit Key Takeaways



- Several major infrastructure needs
  - Transportation (rail)
  - Broadband
  - Water / wastewater
- Few small businesses / entrepreneurs
- Some barriers to manufacturing growth
- Numerous, unconsolidated opportunity sites
- Limited capacity to catalyze investment





# Northern Arizona Communities Visited



- Holbrook
- Joseph City
- St Johns
- Springerville/Eagar
- Pinetop/Show Low
- Snowflake



# Northern Arizona Visit Key Takeaways

- Diverse geography & communities
  - No single regional driver in Apache and Navajo Counties
  - Varied opportunities
  - Strategic commonalities
- Regional infrastructure progress
- Strong leadership and collaboration
- High-quality education/training assets
- Emerging business/entrepreneurship development



# Northern Arizona Visit Key Takeaways



- Capacity limitations
  - Staffing
  - Organizational
- Local infrastructure in some communities insufficient for growth
- Housing quality and supply an impediment to retaining/attracting workers, families
- Limited healthcare access



# NEXT STEPS

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Refine regional coal transition strategies



Identify potential projects



Review projects for alignment with assistance and funding opportunities



Develop communication materials to help seek partners & funding





**Heidi Byrd**

*Federal Program Officer- New Mexico, Office of  
Internet Connectivity and Growth*



**Mark Pearson**

*Executive Director for San Juan Citizens Alliance*

**Rose Rushing**

*Attorney for the Western Environmental Law Center*

# Four Corners *Community Update*

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**Mark Pearson**, Executive Director, San Juan Citizens Alliance

**Rose Rushing**, Staff Attorney, Western Environmental Law Center

July 26th, 2023





**Mark Pearson**

Executive Director

San Juan

Citizens Alliance



**Rose Rushing**

Staff Attorney

Western Environmental

Law Center





Our Goal: A just and equitable transition for the Four Corners region that prioritizes community voices.

### Why is this needed:

- A legacy of abandonment, pollution and environmental injustice in the Four Corners.

### Recent Successes:

- Abandoned/ Orphaned Well Clean-Up
- San Juan Solar Project
- Animas River Access





## Well Cleanup & The Reclamation Economy

- LANL Partnership to use advanced technology to identify problem wells
- Federal and State funding for orphaned and abandoned wells
- Benefits of reclamation economy include: improved community health, improved environmental quality and land value, easy access solar sites with existing infrastructure

# San Juan Solar

- Phase 1 construction began July 11th, 2023 and will provide 200MW + 100MW Battery Storage
- Project in total will provide 400MW
- Utilizes stranded assets of the San Juan Generation Station
- Will provide 400 local jobs
- Tax base replacement for Central Consolidated School District



# What comes next?

## **A just and equitable transition from a fossil fuel based economy to a diverse sustainable local economy including:**

### Renewable Energy Hub

- Existing infrastructure, ample sunshine, and reclaimed lands make the Four Corners ideal for large scale renewable development, storage, and dispatchment.
- Ample ongoing projects including San Juan Solar, Kayenta PV Solar Project, Red Mesa Tapaha, Arroyo Solar, and Jicarilla Solar

### Reclamation Economy

- 30 million invested for San Juan Generation Station Clean Up so far
- 25 million allocated for New Mexico orphaned well cleanup so far
- Opportunities with LANL, San Juan College and to support local well clean-up businesses like A-Plus Well Service

### Recreation Economy

- With the Animas and San Juan rivers, abundant public lands, and a rich cultural history, the Four Corners is the perfect home for a flourishing recreation economy
- Progress already happening with new Cedar Hill boat ramp



# Thank you.

Questions?

[mark@sanjuancitizens.org](mailto:mark@sanjuancitizens.org)

[rushing@westernlaw.org](mailto:rushing@westernlaw.org)





**Morgan Rodman**

*Executive Director for the White House Council on  
Native American Affairs*



Interagency Working Group on  
Coal & Power Plant Communities  
& Economic Revitalization

# INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP FOUR CORNERS RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

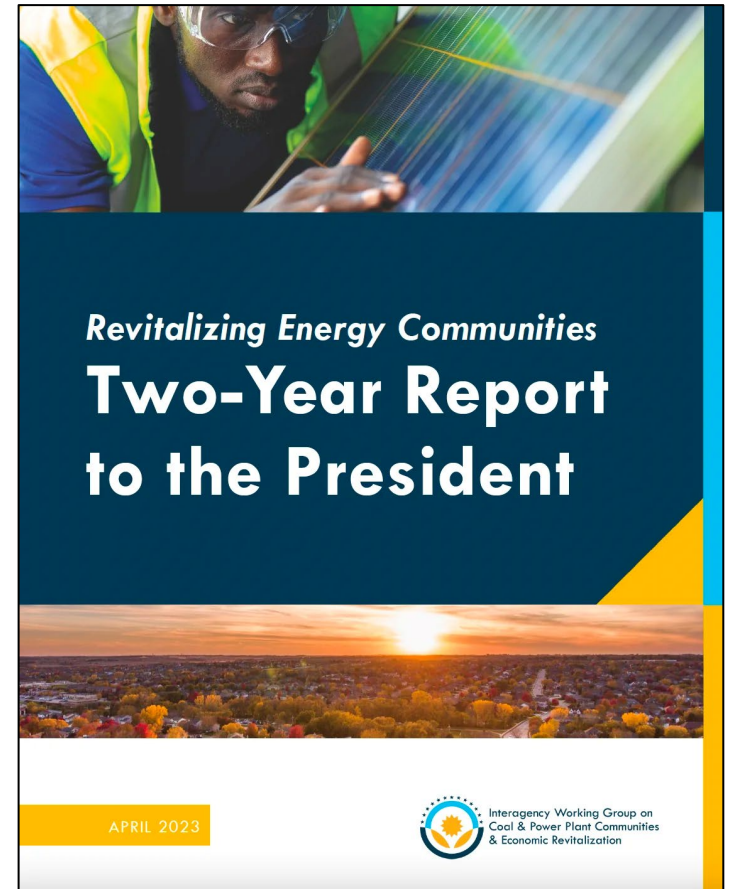
## FORWARD OUTLOOK

July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2023

# The Energy Communities Interagency Working Group

The historic passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act has greatly increased the amount of federal funding available to meet the needs of energy communities across the nation.

The ***Revitalizing Energy Communities: Two-Year Report*** previews the Administration's path forward to ensure the nation sustains momentum in building a clean energy future made in America and powered by American workers. The report outlines the transformative activities the Biden Administration has taken since January 2021 to provide robust outreach and engagement with energy communities, and to ensure real investments continue flowing to those communities through strategic agency efforts and implementation of the major legislation signed during the Administration's first two years.



<https://energycommunities.gov>





# Continuing the Dialogue - Community Connection

- Developing a series of events aimed at information exchange between the IWG agency leads and community members

- Emerging Concepts

- Economic Summit (exchanging best practices, addressing capacity needs, **refining** our regional voice)

- Workforce for Tomorrow Summit (new energy/environmental economy jobs, retaining/attracting workers)

- Environmental Summit (discussions on plant/mine site repurposing, renewable energy projects)

- Capacity Building Roadshow (grant writing, project showcase)

- Regional Water Concerns for Energy Transition – Building on the DOE/DOI Energy-Water Student Symposium



# Continuing the Dialogue - Community Connection

- Engaging with other teams on regionally relevant topics

  - Coal-to-Nuclear Workshop: Planned for Nov 2023 with the IWG and DOE Nuclear Energy Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear (GAIN) team

  - will add a couple others here.....

- Please reach out [4C-RRT@LANL.GOV](mailto:4C-RRT@LANL.GOV) with questions, suggestions and opportunities to connect



# Q&A

Extra Slides

# Updates: Regional Environmental Focus Groups

- Continued meetings with San Juan Citizens Alliance (<https://www.sanjuancitizens.org/>) to build a connection to RRT and to listen/understand goals for clean air, pure water, and healthy lands and wildlife as well as regional economic development

  - ongoing interaction with LANL technical staff and DOE Program Manager working on leveraged state-of-the-art technology to identify/characterize orphan wells in the 4C region (including tribal lands)

  - goal is to help catalog regional wells and quantify their impacts – BIL provides \$4.7 billion investment to plug orphaned wells

- Established interaction with Western Environmental Law Center

  - work with San Juan Citizens Alliance, Diné C.A.R.E., Tó Nizhóní Ání, Naeva, and other Four Corners based groups on economic transition and environmental issues

  - goal is to establish actionable projects to bring to the IWG team

- Established interaction with NM Environmental Dept.

  - interest in workforce development centering on environmental reclamation (emphasis on uranium mine sites)



## Updates: Emerging Focus – AZ, UT

**-AZ United Way:** discussed focus and need centered around childcare and behavioral health resources – emerging focus on regional roundtable discussions

**-Russ Yelton (consultant) - St Johns AZ:** discussed projects in St Johns areas associated with pending closure of Coronado Generating Station (sched. closure 12/2032)

- strong interactions with DOE (GAIN), USDA (RISE), broadband (state and federal) and EDA

- need for housing – lack of available builders

- need for workforce development and education – energy curriculum with emphasis on nuclear power

**-UT Emory Co.:** accelerated shutdown of Huntington and Hunter plants sched. for 2032

- desire to connect with LPO regarding opportunity zones

- interest in skill adjacency in terms of time of new energy jobs to bridge the transition

- similar interest in community outreach related to nuclear power



## Current Focus EPA

- Need to follow-up on regional brownfields program opportunities in Regions 6, 9 (as well as tribal superfund sites) to understand how EPA efforts in other regions have successfully impacted energy-transition communities

- Navajo EPA outreach on Navajo Forrest Products Industry Site

- Technical assistance for mine/plant site repurposing – helping communities develop a plan of action (e.g., Cochiti Gravel Mine site)

- Additional interest in connecting the community to opportunities associated with the Tronox settlement



# Current Focus USDA

- Established a USDA team meeting focusing on initial topics detailed below:
  - Developing strategies for ReConnect (broadband), REAP (energy), and various loan programs
  - Rural Utility Service Pilot Program – connection to Navajo Home Power, LLC – path forward? Connection to DOE/EPA solar programs?
  - Outcomes and lessons-learned from St Johns RISE grant (job accelerator)
  - Navajo/DOE MOU event outcomes
  - Interface with EDA-NACo-BRECC technical assistance for setting up FY24 proposals





## Current Focus NTIA

- Continued dialogue with NM and Tribal focus areas with emphasis on tracking significant tribal community investments
- Need to enhance messaging on planned impacts of these investments as details, within general community, are not widely known – especially within tribal communities
  - heard about right-of-way concerns as a limiting factor
  - how will we address the “last mile” for remote locations?
- Need to codify workforce training opportunities for equipment installation and maintenance



# Emerging Focus Dept. of Education

- Many opportunities in terms of connecting displaced workforce with regional tribal/non-tribal colleges for retraining and certification programs
- Significant college/university interest in training for energy transition (EVs, hydrogen, CO<sub>2</sub> storage, nuclear, etc.)
- Additional training synergies with NTIA (broadband) and USDA (biomass conversion) to be explored
- Potential for summit to explore “workforce of tomorrow”?

# Connecting the Community with the Dept. of Transportation (**Mike Stark (SJ County) or Chris Hunter (4CED)**)

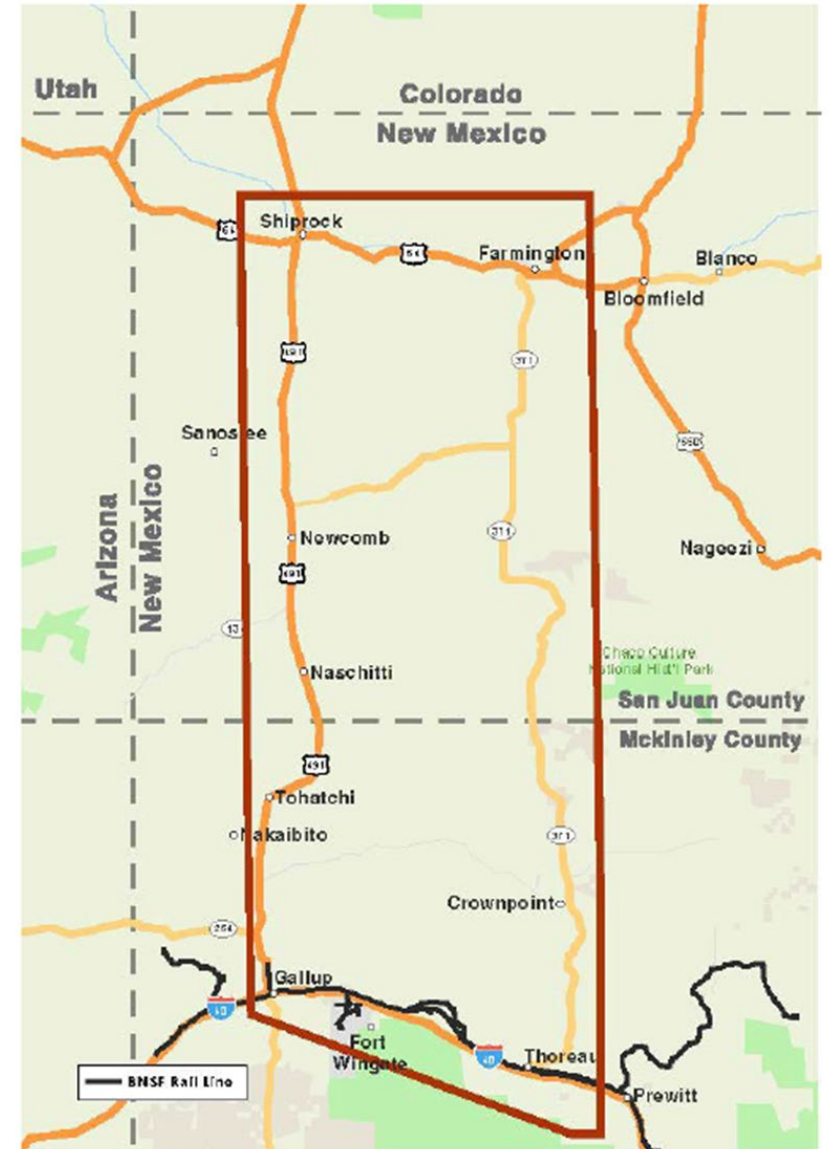
## BUILD Grant: Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study

-Despite 140,000 national route miles, the U.S. freight rail network does not serve San Juan County, the Navajo Nation or the greater Four Corners region. A collaborative partnership is working to change this.

-A stakeholder team consisting of San Juan County, Navajo Nation, 4CED, City of Farmington, and local industry leaders with oversight from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) have been working with HDR Engineering, Inc. to develop the planning documents.

-The project team's goal is to have the feasibility study completed by first quarter of 2024.

Figure 1: Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study Limits



# Working with the Dept. of Labor and NM Dept. of Workforce Solutions (**NM Sec Nair, DOL-Rebecca Sarmiento or Jason Sandel**)

Initial focus on displaced mine, plant and supporting industry workers associated with the SJGS closure

**NM Dept. of Workforce Solutions issued a revised Displaced Worker Development Plan (3/28/2023)**

-The Department proposed direct, one-time payments of \$20,000 (up to \$12M); 5/2 event in Farmington started the process of distributing funding and connecting workers with educational opportunities (approx. 500 workers)

-Using new \$750,000 DWS received in 2023, DWS will engage in workforce development related to the advanced energy field. These funds will be deployed in close coordination with the Economic Development Department.

**Working with DOL on additional options for tribal/non-tribal communities**

**Planning to expand focus to AZ in the intermediate term – impacts from NGS and planning for pending closures**



After nearly 50 years of operation, the SJGS is now “dark” and slated for decommissioning. The plant site, associated mine site and supporting industry employed approximately 500 workers with high-wage jobs.

# Advocating for the Community with the Dept. of Commerce (**Grace Blanchard**)

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

- **Keeping 4C community abreast of funding opportunities**
  - Working to address widespread concern about limitations on capacity to respond to highly relevant opportunities – reported this issue during a WH briefing
- **Actively working with the National Association of Counties (NACo) and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADo) to bring regional community leaders together**
  - 4C received 2 of 8 Building Resilient Economies in Coal Communities (BRECC) Action Challenge Awards
- **Actively advocating for Assistance to Coal Communities (ACC) funding to further support regional capacity building**



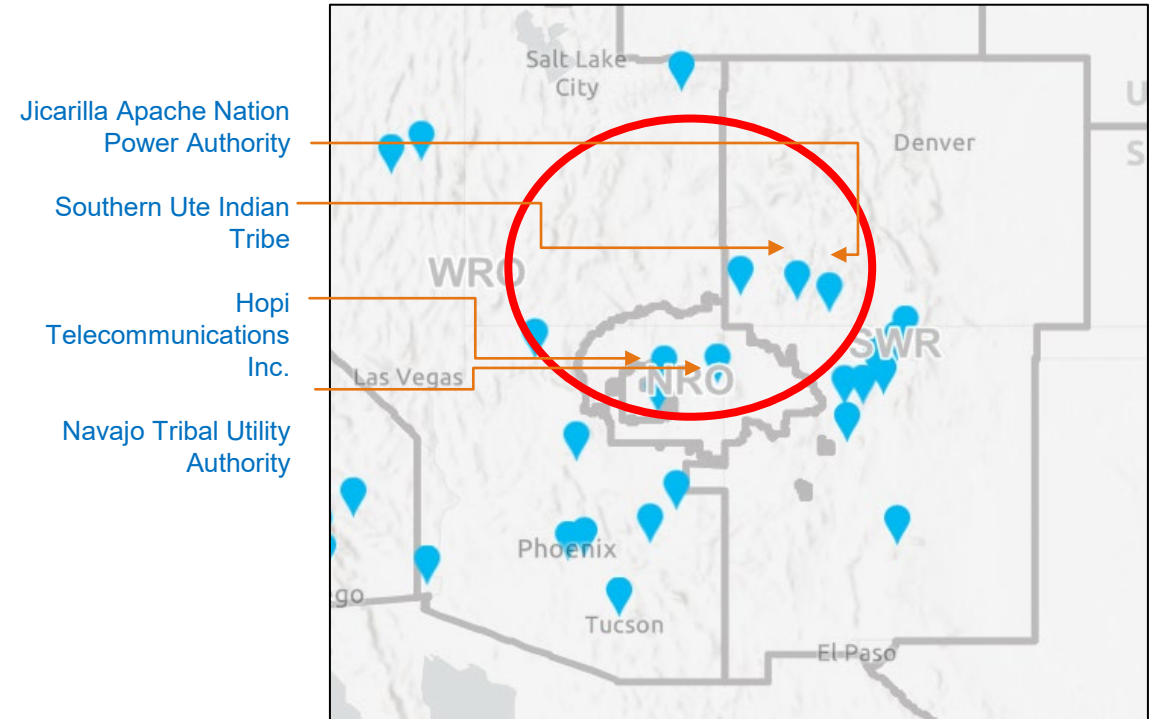
The counties of Apache, Coconino and Navajo (AZ) and San Juan County (NM) were selected for BRECC awards in February 2023.

# Understanding Regional Opportunities for Enhanced Broadband (Heidi Byrd or Gabe Montoya)

Approximately \$270M in Recent Tribal Broadband Investment

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

- Standing meeting with regional NTIA and Tribal Broadband Connectivity Programs to address key issue from 4C-RRT Kickoff Meeting – need for enhanced broadband to address tribal economic and educational growth
- Need to coordinate tribal/non-tribal federal and state investments to maximize impacts – concern of right-of-way have been communicated to policy experts
- Need to enhance messaging on planned impacts of these investments as details, within general community, are not widely known – especially within tribal communities
- Need to codify workforce needs and train regional workers to install and maintain new equipment
- How will we address the “last mile” for remote locations?



<https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/resources/grant-programs/tribal-broadband-connectivity-program>

# Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs (**Wahleah Johns or Tommy Jones**)

**-Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed Dec 2022 between DOE, Dept. of Interior and Navajo Nation**

**-Multiple events held to establish how federal agencies can assist with Navajo economic revitalization**

**-Project teams assembling and connecting with regional, federal agency leads to advance efforts**



**3/9-3/10 Navajo Economic Revitalization meeting in Window Rock, AZ**

Agenda focused on accelerating projects (71 were presented initially) in terms of leveraging immediate funding opportunities with the goal to fast-track the most promising projects by bringing teams and resources together

# What we've been working on since the 8/25 kickoff meeting (not an exhaustive list)

## Colorado

- Wade Buchanan/Terri Livermore (CO Office of Just Transition)

## New Mexico

- 4C Economic Development (Exec. Committee, Board)
- Navajo Technical University (Provost, faculty)
- San Juan College (President, Deans, faculty)
- Diné College (VP of External Affairs)
- Northern Rio Grand Corridor Collaboration
- Aztec municipal schools

## Arizona

- Salt River Project/Apache County ; Arizona Public Service/Hopi, Navajo communities
- Coral Evans (Senator Mark Kelly's office)
- We Are Water Dialogue (Window Rock, AZ)

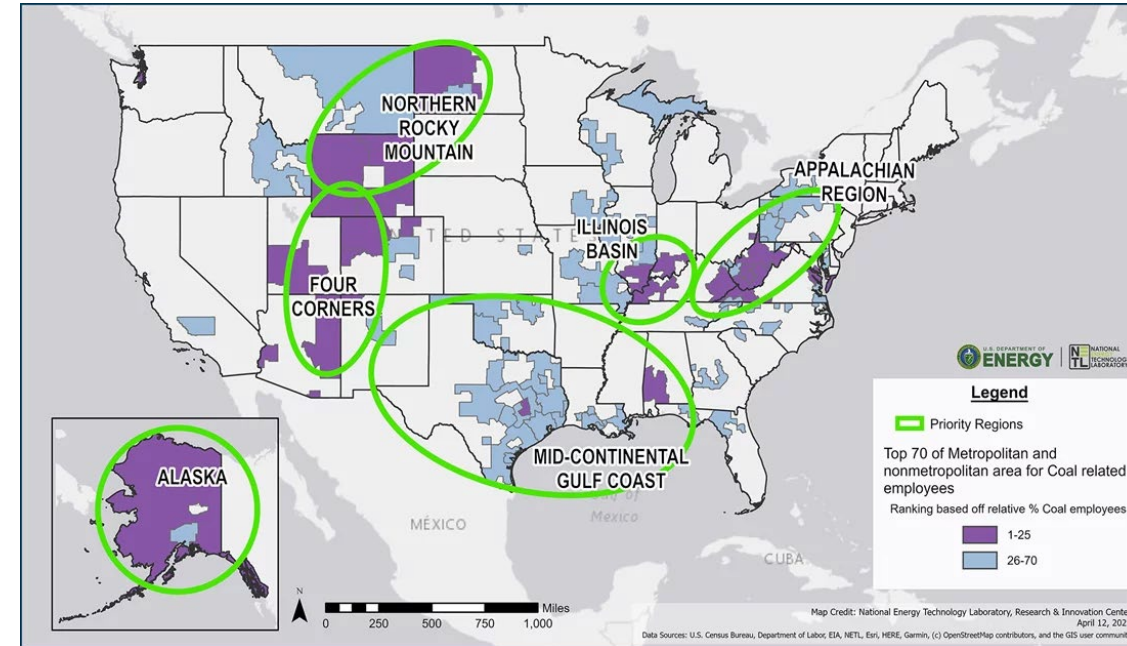
## Utah

- Southeastern Utah Economic Development (Geri Gamber, Exec. Director)



# Rapid Response Teams (RRTs)

- RRTs work within energy communities at the time of a past or approaching fossil fuel facility closure to address worker and community needs using existing federal resources. The RRT framework is unique in the way it learns about and addresses fossil energy-related economic, environmental, community, and health challenges in each energy community.
- RRTs Implement Their Work by:
  1. Coordinating the identification and use of Energy Communities IWG member agencies' resources.
  2. Establishing working relationships with community leaders and members.
  3. Providing dedicated technical assistance to address the community's immediate needs and longer-term economic transition strategies.
  4. Assisting in making sure our programs work for communities' efforts to transform and grow their economies.



There are three existing RRTs in Wyoming, the Four Corners and the Illinois Basin. Additional RRTs are being established in Montana, Pennsylvania and Kentucky.

Each region has a unique set of challenges the RRTs aim to address, including workforce training, economic diversification, reclamation of legacy energy assets, broadband access, infrastructure improvements and more.

# Current Focus

- Multiple interactions with regional economic development teams, county officials, COGs and community groups – covering over 9 regional counties
- Initial interaction with Community Builders (<https://communitybuilders.org/>) team as part of the BRECC Action Challenge awards impacting San Juan Co., NM and Apache, Navajo and Coconino Cos., AZ
- Desire for a regional economic summit to build networks, establish collaborative efforts, share lessons learned and develop a regional voice

