

DETERMINED TO LEARN

Leadership New Mexico's class of 2011 plunges into the latest Core Program session focusing on law enforcement and education



BY MICHAEL HARTRANFT
Journal Staff Writer

High-speed driving, firing semi-automatic weapons and learning the challenges facing air marshals in an uncertain world were all part of a recent day's diverse education for the class of 2011 in Leadership New Mexico's flagship Core Program.

Many of the 39 community leaders who comprise the class took in a tour of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Artesia before plunging into the heart of their fourth core session — education in New Mexico — the next day at the headquarters of Yates Petroleum, an industrial icon in the southeastern part of the state.

"This session was really a great one, it really was," said Leadership New Mexico co-founder and president Patty Komko of the March 31-April 2 event.



RICHARD PIPES/JOURNAL

Roberta Lee of Leadership New Mexico's Core Program learns how to hold a Colt machine gun before firing at a target on the shooting range at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Artesia.

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Program participants explore leadership

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Education issues

Katy Haycock of the Washington, D.C.-based Education Trust, speaking in Artesia, highlighted the key issues facing education at a national level, while Sen. Vernon Asbill, R-Carlsbad, a 34-year educator himself, touched on this year's legislative developments concerning education.

Program participant Lashonda Seay, vice president of finance for the Albuquerque office of food distributor Sysco New Mexico, said she also was impressed by a presentation by Margie Huerta, president of the Doña Ana Community College.

"It was really good to hear about some of the programs here in New Mexico we are establishing at that level to improve our graduation rates and help children take advantage of the community college experience as well," Seay said.

Participants got some hands-on experience at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center.

"We actually were able to shoot a Glock 9 (semi-automatic pistol) and Sub-9 rifle," Seay said. "They also took us out on their driving course, which teaches up-and-coming officers how to drive a vehicle in (emergency situations), taking sharp turns and how to do that safely."

No, they didn't get to drive. "We'd probably kill ourselves if we did," Seay said with a laugh. "It is a very acquired skill."

Bulldog pride

Participants also got an up-close look at another institution of great community pride: the Bulldog Bowl, home to the 27-time state champion Artesia High School Bulldogs, which among many other features has a museum devoted to the town's rich football tradition.

"It felt like I was going into a college stadium," Seay said.

The group has a pair of sessions to go — in Farmington in May and Taos in June — before becoming the 15th class to complete the program.

Leadership New Mexico



RICHARD PIPES/JOURNALT

was founded in 1995 on the premise that informed leaders are better leaders, affording business, community and government officials opportunities to learn about and confront the challenges facing New Mexico. The organization strives for diverse participation, selecting men and women of all ethnicities from various businesses, industries, nonprofits and local governments from all parts of the state.

Up-and-comers

It also offers the Local Government Leadership Program, created in 2003 for county and municipal elected officials, and Connect New Mexico — The Next Generation of Leadership, added in 2007 to provide leadership training to the state's young professionals in the 25-40 age group.

Chaves County Commissioner Greg Nibert, a member of the 2011 core class, is also a graduate of the local government offering.

"It's really a great program and really is helpful to understand the bigger dynamics that go on in the whole state," he said. "As a local business leader, or local political person, you sometimes get myopic and focus on your community and don't realize how it fits into the bigger picture."

Flagship program

The core program, Komko said, is "in a sense, is sort of our flagship program.

It's for senior leaders from throughout the state."

Senior, that is, in the sense of those who have worked their way into decision-making positions in their fields. The average age of this year's class is 48.2 years old, Komko said.

Among the first 32 graduates — from Class of 1997 — were former Lt. Gov. Diane Denish, then-Farmington Mayor Tom Taylor, now a state

representative, and Dr. Jane Henney, then-vice president of the Health Sciences Center, she said. It has since graduated more than 600 people from 40 communities.

Each program session is devoted to one of five basic topics, with a different host city for each: After kicking off the 2010-2011 program with a retreat in September in Santa Fe, it was health and human services in Silver City in November and

economic development in Las Cruces in January. Coming up are energy, environment and natural resources in Farmington in May, and crime and justice in Taos in June.

Problems, solutions

Each session is spread over three days, with a day-and-a-half of instructional sessions where participants hear expert speakers and get the opportunity to ask questions, analyze and develop solutions to critical problems facing New Mexico.

"In economic development, it might be integration, it might be a border trade issue, it might be agriculture, but within that day and a half, we try and keep those sections pretty current," Komko said.

Ken Freeman, general manager of SOC Los Alamos, which provides physical security services for Los Alamos National Laboratory, said the Leadership New Mexico experience has been invaluable.

"If I have an issue I need help with, there's a number of people I can call who are steeped in the issue," he said.

The Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Artesia uses a tabletop city to teach trainees about secure movements. Members of the Leadership New Mexico Core Program toured the center recently.

CLASS OF 2011

KAMAL ALI

Ali believes that the major weakness New Mexico faces is a lack of economic growth. He says, "To change this challenge, the investment opportunities in the state must be viewed positively by regional, national and multinational companies. We need to attract more companies to come to the state to invest by providing an enabling environment for them." Ali believes state and local governments need to work together to provide and enhance the necessary infrastructure in order to attract businesses to the state. Through his Leadership New Mexico experience, he has gained insights into how leadership influences change and says, "I certainly intend to do my part in providing leadership in my sphere of influence across the state of New Mexico."



**City President,
BBVA Compass
Albuquerque**

DANNY ARMIJO II

Armijo defines leadership as the process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective. He goes on to say that he believes leadership is a "continuous improvement process," and that leadership is not just about one person, as no one person can be successful without the help of others. It is about a team effort. His vision for New Mexico is for the state to become the nation's premier leader in alternative energy, creating quality jobs and promoting economic development growth. To realize this vision he feels there needs to be a cooperative effort between government, industry and consumers. When asked about his experience with Leadership New Mexico, Armijo says, "I have taken a step back to really look at our state, and I have found a mission in life to take an even stronger stance in our state's well-being. I'm very proud to be from New Mexico."



**Regional
Director,
New Mexico
Manufacturing
Extension
Partnership
Roswell**

KATIE BALDWIN

Baldwin is motivated by not only her successes but also her failures. She says to be a great leader, one has to understand what each success and failure teaches you and how to appreciate the lessons and rewards of both. She is inspired by the success and courage of our country's founding fathers and the obstacles they overcame to accomplish something that seemed impossible. When asked what she considers New Mexico's greatest strengths, Baldwin says said that the people are one of the greatest assets we have, but she feels that they are under-utilized. Having less dependence on government and more personal accountability could help change the mentality and presence of our state. And when asked what she has gained from the Leadership New Mexico Core Program, Baldwin says, "I see myself helping my local community to make a difference and change our outlook. If each of us did that, then the state would make progress in reaching great feats."



**Chief Operating
Officer, James
Hamilton
Construction Co.
Silver City**

MARK BIEL

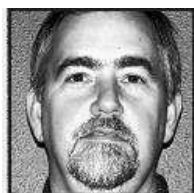
Biel sees education and health care as the major weaknesses that affect the progressive growth of New Mexico. He goes on to say he believes developing each of these areas is what it will take for the economy to thrive and allow for New Mexico to compete on a world level rather than being at the bottom of the national level. Biel feels the natural resources and cultural diversity have made New Mexico what it is today. When asked how he sees applying his Leadership New Mexico experience in the future, he says, "Continuing to network with other leaders throughout New Mexico to develop economic diversity and doing what I can to strengthen the health care and education systems." His vision for New Mexico is to better utilize its natural resources and people to build a better future.



**President and
Owner, R.A.
Biel Plumbing &
Heating
Farmington**

BRUCE BOYER

Boyer's vision for New Mexico is for the state to become more proactive and progressive in aspects of business development, to better utilize its resources and infrastructure, and to better capitalize on the advanced technology capabilities the state has to offer. To realize this vision, he sees the need for the people of New Mexico to more effectively collaborate and work hand in hand to tackle issues for the overall betterment of the entire state. Although a resident of New Mexico for nearly fifteen years, Boyer says he never fully understood all that New Mexico has to offer and the deeper issues that the state faces. "The Leadership New Mexico program has afforded me the opportunity to visit different areas of the state, understand the issues we face, and learn what resources are available. All of the exceptional speakers, tours and the other program participants have proved to be invaluable," Boyer says.



**Production
Manager,
ConocoPhillips
Farmington**

PAUL BRIGGS

Briggs considers education, health care and the environment to be the three biggest issues New Mexico faces today. "There needs to be a desire to continually improve the quality of life here that demands our concerted efforts; New Mexico has its own unique challenges, and it will take specific initiatives to resolve all its complicated issues," he says. Briggs' vision for New Mexico is for continual improvement in the quality of life of all its residents while retaining its unique essence. He feels this can be accomplished by firm leadership, an intelligent use of resources and a fearless drive. Briggs says his desire to participate in the Leadership New Mexico Program stemmed from the program's reputation of quality curriculum and the diversity of the participants. His hope is to gain in-depth knowledge on topics and issues that face the state that will be helpful in both his professional and personal life.



**Division
Manager, Brycon
Construction
Rio Rancho**

BOB CARTER

As a new resident of New Mexico, Carter sees the most pressing issues the state faces are the economy, poverty and health care. He feels the state Legislature needs to take a hard look at current laws and policies that discourage industry from doing business in New Mexico. He believes that in order to lead, you also have to serve, meaning one needs to create conditions that enable individuals within an organization to accomplish a common mission or objective and, most importantly, taking take a personal interest in the welfare and betterment of those you lead. When asked what he hopes to gain from Leadership New Mexico, Carter says, "I hope to gain a better understanding of the political structures and processes that govern New Mexico. I am also interested in learning what the key issues and challenges are of business owners and other federal, state and local agencies beyond my own organization. I believe the contacts that I make through this experience will prove to be an invaluable resource for years to come."



**Executive
Director, U.S.
Army White
Sands Missile
Range
White Sands**

CLASS OF 2011

SUE CHAMBERS

Chambers believes leaders need to have the ability to communicate a vision to others in such a meaningful way that they embrace the leader's vision and become totally focused on attaining the goal. She envisions New Mexico as the land of opportunity for our children, by making quality education and health care readily accessible. Chambers feels strongly that there is a great need to recruit companies with high-paying jobs to New Mexico to keep our best and brightest youth in our state. When asked what she hopes to gain from Leadership New Mexico, Chambers says, "By gaining a deeper understanding of the social and economic challenges in other parts of our state, I hope to become a better citizen."



**President,
Chambers
Benefit Group,
APC Albuquerque**

SCOTT ECKSTEIN

Eckstein's vision for New Mexico is to create a business-friendly, self-sufficient, diverse travel destination where anyone would be proud to bring his or her family to visit or live. To realize this vision, he says it would take state government to make changes in restrictions placed on various industries that would allow for future development of natural resources. Eckstein says, "By doing this it would also allow us to create additional jobs, and bring more money into the economy, thus allowing improvements to the state that result in a better quality of life." Through his Leadership New Mexico experience, Eckstein says he hopes to gain a more thorough understanding of the various concerns and issues facing our state on both a local and state level, and to learn more about the diversity, opportunities and cultures found throughout New Mexico.



**County
Commissioner
San Juan County**

JEFF ELMORE

Although not a native New Mexican, Elmore says he's grown to absolutely love the state. He believes some of the greatest strengths are the climate, the diverse landscape and the history. Elmore sees New Mexico as overregulated and restrictive to business development and growth. He feels that this will need to be changed to get businesses such as agriculture, health care, oil and gas, and other energy companies to come here, bring jobs and help New Mexico prosper. Elmore says the Leadership New Mexico program has armed him with facts, statistics and vital information about the issues the state faces. He goes on to say, "This knowledge will be applied with every vote, business decision, personal financial decision I make, and will also impact the guidance I give my children, organizations I support, and where my personal strengths can be best utilized."



**Branch Manager,
Helena Chemical
Co.
Mesquite**

MICHAEL ESPIRITU

Espiritu describes leadership as the art of influencing people by creating an environment where people will motivate themselves toward success. He further believes that leadership is also about listening, learning and applying your skills and knowledge to support others while improving a process and achieving goals. Espiritu envisions New Mexico leading the nation as the state of choice for small-business retention, expansion and new opportunities, thereby creating economic growth and prosperity which would enhance the quality of life for its citizens. To accomplish this, Espiritu believes the state needs to continue strong economic-development incentive programs to attract new industries and assist those already established to become even more successful. To do his part, Espiritu says, "My contributions are to work closely with our state legislators to advocate for and create business-friendly policy, and to support those incentives which improve our ability to attract and support opportunities impacting our state and local economies."



**President and
Chief Executive
Officer,
Alamogordo
Chamber of
Commerce
Alamogordo**

KENNETH FREEMAN

Freeman considers the top three issues facing New Mexico to be the state's financial well-being, health care and education, due to the huge impact the state faces with its budget deficit. He believes that by improving education, better managing health care costs and getting the budget deficit under control, New Mexico can grow and prosper. Freeman would like to see New Mexico be a fiscally responsible state with strong education and health values for its citizens. He feels Leadership New Mexico is a very worthwhile step in the right direction in tackling the tough problems in this state. Freeman says, "It gets everyone on the same page by increasing their level of understanding of the issues. And armed with this knowledge and our association with other Leadership New Mexico alumni, the state will eventually become the benefactor."



**General Manager,
SOC Los Alamos
Los Alamos**

JUDY GIANNETTINO

Giannettino is inspired by people who lead selflessly, approach life with integrity and are open-minded and willing to work hard to achieve their dreams. She considers the biggest challenges facing New Mexico to be the state's poverty and high-school graduation rates, which negatively impact individuals' lives as well as the state's economic health and future. Giannettino believes solutions cannot be expected to come solely from human service agencies and education systems; there is also a need for successful public-private partnerships, as well as individual and community commitment to change. Her vision for New Mexico is a state dedicated to excellence in education, economic development and ethical and open government in which officials put personal agendas aside and act with the best interests of all the people in mind. She says, "We need to attract more industries, create an economic environment that encourages entrepreneurship and improve education and job training."



**Features
& Special
Sections Editor,
Albuquerque
Journal
Albuquerque**

MIKE GRANDJEAN

Grandjean defines leadership as the ability to be the example and to motivate in a way that inspires individuals to give their very best, to do what is right with compassion and integrity, and to have the tenacity and courage to make unpopular decisions for the betterment of the group. He feels the state environment office, the budget, health insurance and unemployment are the major contributors to the current economic crisis the state is facing today. When asked to describe his vision for New Mexico, Grandjean says, "To provide a well-balanced state budget and to provide education to our children that produce effective leaders with common sense to make great and fiscally sound decisions for New Mexico." To realize this vision he sees developing a volunteer board of successful business persons to analyze New Mexico's procedures in order to eliminate waste and fraud and incorporate best practices in all areas of our government.



**Executive Vice
President and
COO, GranCor
Enterprises Inc.
Albuquerque**

CLASS OF 2011

DR. JANET GREEN

As a native New Mexican, Green's vision for New Mexico is a state that works toward educating its citizens and providing excellent job opportunities. She is inspired by those leaders who lead by example and leaders who influence others to do the very best they can do to affect change in their organization. When asked what she sees as New Mexico's greatest strengths, Green says, "Its people. They are proud of their ties to the land, culture, family, heritage, and the strong desire to provide great opportunities for generations to come." She feels that the Land of Enchantment is a very special place unlike no other in the United States, saying, "We have high access to education near every community across the state. If we strive to improve teaching and learning at all levels, our citizens will be poised to jump into the 'good jobs' being generated statewide."



**Director/HRTM,
New Mexico
State University
Las Cruces**

RON HEAD

Head defines leadership as the ability to identify a vision, communicate it clearly and provide the opportunity and support to make the vision achievable. He believes the state's budget deficit, economic development and the aging population are the top three issues facing New Mexico. These three issues are intertwined and must be addressed in a holistic manner. To improve New Mexico's economic climate and ensure economic development, Head believes there is a great need for balance in regards to environmental concerns and the need for business development. His vision for New Mexico is that the leaders in environmental and economic development will work hand in hand, with environmental concerns addressed in a scientific manner and not based on emotion. He feels Leadership New Mexico has provided him the opportunity to see the issues facing all parts of New Mexico and not just from the southeast corner. In addition, it has provided a network of leaders across the state with which to interact to help make New Mexico a better place for all its citizens.



**Chief Financial
Officer, URS/
Engineered
Products Division
Carlsbad**

KATHERINE HOOPMAN

Hoopman believes some of the most pressing challenges facing New Mexico are the number of children living in poverty, the crime rate and the low high-school graduation rate. She believes it is vital for the state to invest more in education, preventative health care and opportunities for New Mexico's youth. Hoopman sees a huge opportunity in strengthening the relationship with Mexico. She says, "Building strong, positive partnerships and creating better policy on migrant workers, trade, crime reduction, education and tourism could greatly benefit New Mexico." Hoopman defines leadership as a trait, an attitude, a willingness to take ownership of a situation, an organization, a team or one's own behavior. She believes that good leaders understand themselves and what their strengths, weaknesses and values are. Hoopman shares, "Sometimes leadership is simply being a role model, setting an example, being a good listener, or acknowledging the best in others."



**Business
Operations
Manager, Intel
Corp.
Rio Rancho**

RANDY KAMRADT

Kamradt considers the Spaceport near Las Cruces and the uranium enrichment facility (LES) in Eunice as two of the top accomplishments that have impacted New Mexico in the last five years. He says this infrastructure investment in the leading edge of private space programs and a facility that provides stable, high-tech jobs and allows for a domestic source for enriched uranium will benefit the residents of New Mexico and the United States for years to come. Kamradt says he was inspired to participate in Leadership New Mexico to learn more about the issues affecting the state and how to have a positive impact on the solutions. He says, "Leadership New Mexico provides a unique opportunity for New Mexicans to get a high-impact infusion of information that we, as individuals, would not otherwise have the resource or time to acquire."



**Vice President,
Davtek
Clovis**

HAYLEY KLEIN

Klein sees a leader as one who is oftentimes found within the group, sometimes quietly leading the way by setting an example of a strong work ethic and empowering others to develop strength, courage, knowledge and energy to complete a task or be an effective player in a project. Her vision for New Mexico is a state that leads in energy and business development with a strong base in education and workforce development. In order to realize her vision, Klein says communities have to be empowered from the ground up. This will allow for growth, development and more productive communities. When asked what inspired her to go through Leadership New Mexico, she says, "I was inspired to learn more about the state's issues and challenges and understand different perspectives so that I can make more informed decisions about how I might affect and encourage change."



**Executive
Director, Artesia
Chamber of
Commerce
Artesia**

ROBERTA LEE

Lee considers the most pressing challenges facing New Mexico to be an undereducated workforce, overdependence on government for jobs, and an unhealthy population. "New Mexico has a wonderfully diverse population and great natural beauty. If we better educate our workforce, improve the health of our citizens and encourage new industries, New Mexico would be able to better capitalize on its great assets," she says. Lee is most inspired by her co-workers. Their dedication, intelligence, drive and focus on Presbyterian Medical Services' mission inspires her to be the best possible leader she can be. She says she found tremendous value in her Leadership New Mexico experience, adding that the leadership and team-building experiences, as well as the topical sessions around the state, were very educational and valuable. She hopes to use what she has learned to better serve those in her community.



**Chief Financial
Officer,
Presbyterian
Medical Services
Santa Fe**

JOHN MADDEN

Madden's father always taught him to leave things better than you found them. He believes, "Our purpose is to improve our community, state and country for generations to come. Our legacy will be based on how well we served that purpose." When asked what he considers the strengths of New Mexico, Madden says, "Our rich human and physical resources — the diversity of cultures, people and ideas that enable us to strengthen the decision-making process. This will allow for us to improve our economy, environment and better deploy our resources." Madden's vision for the future of New Mexico is to respect the rich history, celebrate the present and plan for the future. To realize his vision, he believes we would need to better utilize our rich human and physical resources.



**President,
Eastern New
Mexico University
Roswell**

CLASS OF 2011

BRENT MOORE

Moore's vision for New Mexico is to preserve and retain those qualities which make New Mexico unique, specifically its rich history and diversity, while making the state an attractive place for investment, business development and increased tourism. He considers the biggest concerns facing New Mexico to be the creation and maintenance of a business-friendly perception of the state, protection and the enhancement of the primary economic engines that drive the economy and improving educational achievement. He sees a leader as one who has the ability to develop strategies that inspire, enable and direct those around him or her to use their talents to contribute to the successful completion of a common goal. Moore says he was inspired to participate in Leadership New Mexico "because it is a unique opportunity to be exposed to and learn about a diverse cross-section of businesses, industries, federal facilities, state agencies and other entities that exist and operate in New Mexico, and it provides an opportunity to interact with individuals from these various sectors."



**Attorney,
Montgomery &
Andrews, P.A.
Santa Fe**

KATHY MORAN

Moran defines leadership as the combination of awareness and action — awareness about present and future goals, challenges and desired outcomes, and actions taken to create the environment and conditions to help bring about the accomplishment of the desired outcomes. When asked what inspired her to participate in Leadership New Mexico, she says, "I was very interested in the goals of Leadership New Mexico and the opportunity to meet people from other communities to discuss issues and share ideas for enhancing and improving all aspects of our quality of life in New Mexico." In addition to being the Land of Enchantment, Moran envisions New Mexico as a place of true opportunity for all its citizens, governed by policies and laws that facilitate opportunity and led by people who have the common goal of creating an environment where individuals and communities flourish.



**Attorney and
Director, Maddox,
Holloman &
Kirksey, P.C.
Hobbs**

GREG NIBERT

Nibert was inspired to participate in Leadership New Mexico by the great attitude and excitement seen in former graduates from his community. "I made the realization that I needed to establish relationships with people from other communities to gain a perspective as to how they are addressing common issues, which in turn will help me become a better county commissioner and business leader," he shares. Nibert considers continued advances in technology, bringing technology to rural New Mexico and progress in health care and medical treatment to be the top accomplishments that have impacted the state in the last five years. He believes that technology and the accessibility of technology in rural areas will allow rural New Mexico to compete on a worldwide basis. Making continued advances in health care and encouraging health care providers to service rural New Mexico will result in a healthier population.



**County
Commissioner,
Chaves County
Roswell**

RANDY PETTIGREW

Pettigrew considers New Mexico's natural resources to be one of its greatest strengths — from the abundance of petroleum-based products and mining reserves and potential for solar and wind energy to New Mexico's natural beauty. He believes we must become sales people for our great state and promote all it has to offer. Pettigrew describes his vision of New Mexico as a culturally diverse, economically and fiscally stable state that leads our country by example of growth and prosperity through proper stewardship of our resources. In order to realize that vision, Pettigrew says it will take individuals who are willing to contribute without the need for self-gratification or financial gain and who have a desire to remove the status quo of business as usual that has hampered our growth potential.



**Chief Operating
Officer, Pettigrew
& Associates,
P.A.
Hobbs**

RICHARD REIF

Reif views the top concerns in New Mexico to be overdependence on federal tax dollars in the local economy; efficiently and effectively getting services such as health care and quality education to a very spread-out population; and the rate of college graduates leaving the state for better opportunities. He sees leadership as setting a positive example and providing a sustainable structure and atmosphere that allows individuals to excel and a team to reach a common goal. Reif was motivated to participate in Leadership New Mexico because of his desire to be the best leader he can be. When asked what he hopes to gain from his participation, he says, "I hope to gain a better understanding of others' views and perspectives and how to manage them so common goals can be achieved."



**Vice President,
Bridger & Paxton
Consulting
Engineers
Albuquerque**

BRIAN ROBINSON

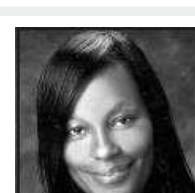
Robinson defines leadership as the ability to develop a strategic vision that optimizes the benefits to the community, creates an environment that provides the community the maximum opportunity to leverage its resources to effectively realize the vision, and inspires passion to pursue that vision. The vision he sees for the state is to become the preferred location for energy-related businesses. Robinson says, "With the establishment of the EnergyPlex in southeastern New Mexico, the state is positioned to become the epicenter of energy-related commerce." Due to the vast amount of opportunity and the ease of locating here, Robinson continues his mission to promote the growth of the energy industry in New Mexico. Through Leadership New Mexico, his hope is to gain a better insight into the challenges that face New Mexico today, understand what is currently being done to address the challenges, and have the opportunity to participate in frank, productive discussions with other leaders from across the state.



**Chief Operating
Officer, Urenco
USA Energy
Services
Eunice**

LASHONDA SEAY

Seay believes that a good leader has the strong desire to inspire people to be the best they can be at all times. She feels that one of New Mexico's strengths is our talented individuals but believes we need to work on the education of our youth by improving and investing in our talent pool. If we could retain this talent and utilize it with new and emerging businesses, this could really help improve the state of our economy. Seay describes her vision for New Mexico as "a sought-after place for new and upcoming businesses that can utilize the talent in our state to ultimately help improve the sustainability of our economy." To realize this vision will take relentless efforts of working with state officials to entice companies to come to New Mexico, which will help us retain our talent and improve our economy.



**Vice President of
Finance, Sysco
New Mexico
Albuquerque**

CLASS OF 2011

ROBYN SIMMONS

Simmons would like New Mexico continue to diversify the economy while enhancing and strengthening its commitment to its residents. She believes her contribution to this vision lies in continuing to educate herself on other cultures and communities within the state and fully understanding the issues New Mexico faces and how she can contribute to the solutions. In the past five years, she has seen the expansion of both Indian gaming and the film industry and the development of the Spaceport near Las Cruces, and she considers these to be some of the top accomplishments in the state. Simmons would like to see New Mexico improve in the areas of job growth, funding for the military bases and laboratories, and the local economy. She says, "Because these are the building blocks of an increased tax base, improving upon these areas will open doors of new opportunities for the state."



Executive Director, Mescalero Apache Grants Office Mescalero

KIM SKINNER

When asked who inspired her as a leader, Skinner says, "My former high school principal, Mr. Strong. He was enthusiastic, positive and genuinely cared for his students." She saw him as a mentor and inspiration because of his passion for education and the students he always encouraged to excel academically. Skinner considers some of the major challenges New Mexico faces today to be a high crime rate, child poverty, the dropout rate, lack of health insurance coverage and the unemployment rate. She believes the state of New Mexico needs to restructure current laws and guidelines to encourage development and expansion of existing and new private businesses. To do her part in shaping New Mexico's future, Skinner says she will speak out regarding promoting and encouraging support for local businesses and will vote for changes in regulations, ordinances, laws and guidelines in ways that encourage growth and creation of private businesses.



City Councilor, City of Elephant Butte Elephant Butte

BELINDA SNYDER

Snyder's vision for New Mexico is that the state be known as the source for innovation, bar none. To realize this vision will take fundamental changes in economic development philosophy and previous strategies for growth and change. She says, "Instead of trying to be the next Silicon Valley or the next Hollywood," we should consider how we can "leverage our assets to be key resources to Silicon Valley and Hollywood while maintaining the great culture and quality of the life we enjoy." Snyder sees the strong base of innovation through the various research institutions and the unique, multifaceted culture as New Mexico's greatest strengths. To build upon these assets, she believes there is a need to better capitalize on the state's research capabilities and utilize the unique and versatile workforce the state has to offer. She feels that the Leadership New Mexico program has allowed her to see New Mexico in its entirety, and what she has learned has made her a better ambassador of the state's assets as well as a better-educated champion for change.



Program Manager, Los Alamos National Laboratory Los Alamos

NEAL SPERO

New to New Mexico, Spero was first struck by the quality of life the state has to offer: "With perfect weather and blue skies combined with miles of biking and hiking trails, it makes for an ideal place to live." He goes on to say that he sees the state as a hidden treasure and that it should take advantage of this to grow and improve the economic environment. Spero's vision for New Mexico is to improve the health of the community by raising the awareness of prevention and wellness and ensuring that everyone has access to quality health care services. To do this, he believes radical change needs to happen in the way health care is delivered in the state. When speaking of his Leadership New Mexico experience, Spero says, "This opportunity has given me insight and understanding of the issues and challenges that we face in our state. The network of friends and business associates that I have met along the way has been most invaluable."



Vice President, Chief Sales and Marketing, Presbyterian Health Plan Albuquerque

SCOTT STAFFORD

Stafford would like to see New Mexico strive to be a leader in all the areas in which it falls so far behind in: private-sector job development, poverty reduction, ethics in politics, graduation rates, drug and alcohol abuse rates, crime rate and access to quality health care. He believes setting the goals higher rather than settling for mediocrity will help New Mexico grow and prosper. Stafford defines leadership as the ability to work together in a group, encourage and direct others, and, when necessary, be creative in order to achieve a common goal. He says this requires an ability to be fair, trustworthy, disciplined, intelligent and at times even courageous in order to be successful. Looking at his Leadership New Mexico experience so far, Stafford says, "I have already gained insight into issues which I have had little previous direct involvement. These are issues that have a real impact on the quality of life for all New Mexicans. In order to respond to these challenges in a meaningful way, it is clearly important for us to first become as knowledgeable as possible."



President, Greer Stafford/SJCF Inc. Albuquerque

ED SULLIVAN

As a newcomer to the state, Sullivan is looking forward to educating himself about New Mexico during his Leadership New Mexico experience. He is also interested in learning about the issues that face the state, identifying areas where opportunities exist to advance the state, and contributing to the development and capitalization of those opportunities. Sullivan believes the top three issues facing New Mexico today are economic stagnation, lack of availability of medical services throughout the state and the need to educate the future workforce. When asked to describe his vision for New Mexico, Sullivan says he sees the Land of Enchantment keeping its old-world charm, hospitality, cultures and spectrum of natural wonder and beauty while advancing its 21st-century development. To realize this vision, Sullivan says there needs to be active participation across the state to introduce, develop and sustain ideas and actions that will continuously improve New Mexico.



Deputy Director, 377th Mission Support Group Kirtland Air Force Base

KEVIN WASHBURN

Washburn considers the state's rich diversity and the fact that it has embraced diversity for five centuries to be New Mexico's greatest asset. He goes on to say that this incredible history has placed us in a national leadership role as the rest of the country increasingly addresses challenges that our communities have faced for centuries. When asked to describe his vision for New Mexico, Washburn says, "Through our leadership, New Mexico will lead the United States in embracing diversity and working together on the most important issues facing our country." He believes in order to improve the state, hard decisions must be made. There must be support for education and other long-term investments and collaboration during difficult times. Washburn feels this will provide an opportunity to build an educated workforce and an environment for future growth.



Dean, University of New Mexico School of Law Albuquerque

CLASS OF 2011

LISA WILCOX

Wilcox believes the state of New Mexico has made progress with regard to attracting new businesses and increasing our environmental efforts but feels more needs to be done in these areas, as well as in improving the overall education system within the state. She joined Leadership New Mexico to increase her awareness of the issues facing the state and to learn more about the state she has lived in for more than 40 years. Wilcox hopes her participation in the program will help her be a better advocate for New Mexico and more active in the areas where New Mexico has a need. Her goals as a leader are to serve those around her so they can be successful and feel inspired and rewarded by their careers. Wilcox says, "People need to feel needed and important. I do. You do. We all do."



Business & Financial Consultant, REDW Albuquerque

RON WILLIAMS

Williams, as a native New Mexican and career banker, believes that one of the steps we need to take to improve New Mexico is to have a much stronger focus on financial literacy in our schools. He says a strong partnership should be formed with the schools and the families they serve to improve their financial management skills and their fiscal behaviors. He believes this will also build self-confidence and increase quality of life. Williams sees himself as a "servant" leader and is inspired by the opportunity to help people see life from a positive perspective. His leadership philosophy stems from a very optimistic outlook and an understanding that how we choose to lead is a very conscious decision. He says every individual has the opportunity to be a great leader. A motto Williams adopted many years ago still applies to his daily leadership activities: "Lead some, follow some, and get out of the way of some."



President and Chief Executive Officer, Grants State Bank Grants

SHERI S. WILLIAMS, ED.D.

When asked who inspired her as a leader, Williams said that she has been inspired by Winston Churchill's driving passion and his unexpected bursts of humility. Her vision for New Mexico is to ensure continued improvement of the educational system, which is so essential to the prosperity of the state. To realize this vision, she says, "I believe local and state leaders must make a firm and unyielding commitment to children's health, welfare and education." Williams believes there needs to be a renewed commitment to education that reflects the diverse beliefs and attitudes of all New Mexicans. She is optimistic that when New Mexicans work together, they will find long-term solutions that will support and sustain our children, our future.



Superintendent, Carlsbad Municipal Schools Carlsbad

HOLLY WOELBER

Woelber considers New Mexico's strengths to be found within its natural resources, strong agricultural sector, oil and gas and the diverse rich culture. She says, "Our state can build upon these strengths by using the best and brightest minds who will make balanced decisions to provide both opportunities to preserve our natural resources and also create a vibrant economy." Woelber would like to see New Mexico become a state that serves the best interests of its residents through sound decision-making. She believes realizing this vision can be accomplished by appointing persons who have a balanced approach to issues, who are willing to do their homework, and who will spend the time gathering information and make sound decisions based on facts. Woelber feels the Leadership New Mexico program gave her the opportunity to network with a variety of individuals and provided a conduit to bring forward ideas and actions for change to our great state.



Partner, HAW Farms Albuquerque