

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
County of Luna

Joe “Oleo” Milo, Jr.
Chairman, District 1

Linda Smrkovsky
Commissioner, District 2



R. Javier Diaz
Commissioner, District 3

Charles “Tink” Jackson
County Manager

700 South Silver Avenue · Post Office Box 551 · Deming, New Mexico 88031
Telephone (575) 546-0494 Facsimile (575) 544-4293

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 6/5/2015
Contact: Matt Robinson, (575) 545-4627

Media Release

Looking for fresh efforts to address longstanding problems, the Luna County Board of Commissioners is convening stakeholders from the community to unify around new economic and workforce development strategies.

Luna County is hosting a two-day event to dive into an assessment guided by an overarching question, “What will it take to reverse the economic decline of Luna County?”

About 40 representatives from 12 key sectors, such as employers, educators and elected officials, will meet on Thursday, June 11 and Friday, June 12 at the Luna County Courthouse.

The stakeholders will be guided through an assessment process by a team of facilitators provided by author and economic think tank director Mark Lautman, who is working with Luna County for the first phase of the project. A successful first phase will lead to Phase II’s planning work.

“Luna County has taken, and will continue to take, action toward community and economic development,” Charles “Tink” Jackson, Luna County manager, said. “This unique opportunity will give the community a thorough analysis of economic conditions on a level we have never seen before. Lowering unemployment and increasing economic opportunities in Luna County is an uphill fight, and we need to utilize all of the tools we possibly can to make it happen.”

At the sessions, stakeholders will be guided through discussions based off of a series of engaging questions, like, “What are the major factors of production gaps,” and, “How many new qualified workers must be added to the market.”

The event facilitators tout that the “clinical, consensus approach” of the assessment is effective at challenging participants to think deeply about job creation and workforce development while giving the group a sense of ownership over the problem and course of action.

“We all know unemployment is high, but this process will give us clear steps we can take to address the problem,” Commission Chairman Joe “Oleo” Milo, Jr., said. “With this knowledge in hand, area policy makers will be empowered to better address the serious issues of unemployment and economic development.”

In the first of five modules, participants will first agree on the structure of the event and then move into agreeing on how many new jobs must be created in the next 10 years. They will calculate the number of jobs that must be created by discussing and answering a series of 10 questions around unemployment, workforce participation, and economic needs, among others.

The opportunity to host the event came out of the county's new Community and Economic Development Committee, which quickly decided in early meetings to concentrate on creating jobs.

"We want to see which jobs to target and how many jobs we can actually handle in the next 10 years," Jessica Etcheverry, director of county Community and Economic Development, said. "This assessment process will give us answers to those questions with the help of Mr. Lautman, one of the most experienced economic developers in New Mexico."

Not only is the assessment open to the public, but Etcheverry stressed the importance of receiving input from community members to make the project as comprehensive as possible. If you would like to participate, contact her at (575) 543-6643.

###