



# Editorial

## **Helping New Mexico Grow and Prosper By Patricia Dominguez**

USDA Rural Development is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America. I was recently appointed by President Biden to serve as the State Director for USDA Rural Development in New Mexico. I am honored to have been selected to serve New Mexico in this capacity. I was raised in the small northern New Mexico towns of Chamisal and Peñasco, and I understand the promise of, and the challenges faced by rural communities.

I look forward to helping rural communities across New Mexico access programs that will promote local initiatives and build on the unique strengths of that community. Our work has always been important but its more vital now than ever before as we continue to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our mission is to improve the quality of life in rural communities. We administer 40 programs that provide grants, loans, and loan guarantees to support rural infrastructure, affordable housing, vital community facilities, and business development. Business owners across the state will tell you how we helped them open their doors or how we helped them lower their overhead costs by improving their energy efficiency by providing the funding to install solar systems.

For example, in Shiprock we funded a \$26-million wastewater project. We funded a water project in Grants where we are replacing old waterlines with new ones. We provided the funding to purchase three police cars in Cuba. We also provided the funds to purchase and install a solar power system for the Country Meat Company in Raton. Our programs are diverse and allow us to meet the wide-ranging needs of rural New Mexico.

USDA Rural Development is also instrumental in expanding broadband in rural New Mexico. We funded the Kit Carson Electric broadband project that expanded services to areas that previously had no internet access. We also provided the funding for the Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) Program based at University of New Mexico Health Care Sciences Department. This funding is being used to provide training to first responders to manage patients that have contracted Covid-19.

As you can see, we are committed to making rural New Mexico a great place to live.

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