

2025 FOCUS REPORT

Contents

DELIVERING VALUE. DRIVING RESULTS.	04
A YEAR OF IMPACT	05
POLICY & ADVOCACY SUCCESSES	06
A YEAR OF IMPACTFUL EVENTS	10
A CASE STUDY IN STATEWIDE COLLABORATION	12
YOUR FOUNDATION AT WORK: SHAPING NEW MEXICO'S ECONOMIC FUTURE	13
BE PRO BE PROUD NEW MEXICO	14
MEET THE CHAMBER TEAM	16
LOOKING AHEAD	18
CHAMBER INVESTORS	18

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Every conversation,
every connection,
every voice matters.
Our members bring
energy, ideas, and
action, and that is
what transforms this
Chamber from an
organization into
a force for New
Mexico's future.

— Leslie Hielema, President & CEO,
New Mexico Chamber of Commerce

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAMBER

This Year, Our Progress Was Powered by You.

Together, we strengthened New Mexico's business climate, advanced forward-looking policy, and laid the groundwork for long-term prosperity. Through your leadership and engagement, the Chamber elevated the voice of business at every level, ensuring that the needs of employers and communities were heard and acted upon.

Our mission is simple but powerful: to make New Mexico the best place to live, work, and do business. Through collaboration, advocacy, and action, we work to make that vision a reality every day. And this year, our collective impact was felt across the state.

Business is more than commerce. It is connection. It is where local strengths come together. The Chamber brings those connections together, uniting voices from every region and sector to shape a stronger, more prosperous economy.

We're a statewide network of leaders committed to shaping a stronger future for New Mexico.



DELIVERING VALUE. DRIVING RESULTS.

How Our Members Benefited in FY25

Membership in the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce means more than affiliation. It means impact. In FY25, our members gained influence, access, visibility, and leadership opportunities that translated into real business results and policy outcomes.

A STRONGER VOICE IN POLICY

NMCC maintained a full-time presence at the Roundhouse, advocating on key legislation and engaging year-round with policymakers. Our members helped shape a more competitive and predictable business environment.

DIRECT ACCESS TO DECISION MAKERS

From legislative briefings to member forums with state leaders, members had a seat at the table, ensuring business priorities were heard where it counts.

CREDIBILITY AND RECOGNITION

Through statewide events, policy engagement, and earned media, members were recognized as forward thinking leaders advancing New Mexico's future.

CONNECTIONS THAT MATTER

Regional forums, issue area committees, and sector coalitions gave members the opportunity to build strong, strategic relationships across industries and communities.

OPPORTUNITIES TO LEAD

Members did not just participate. They helped drive the agenda. From co-authoring the 2025 Policy Agenda to shaping legislative testimony, NMCC members were the trusted voices of New Mexico's business community.



A YEAR OF IMPACT

Real Results for New Mexico Business

Thanks to the leadership and engagement of our members, FY25 was a year of bold action and measurable success. Together, we moved a pro-business agenda that reshaped public policy, strengthened our workforce, and laid the foundation for long-term prosperity across the state.

Our Collective Efforts Delivered Wins Across Four Strategic Pillars

These are not just policy wins. They are outcomes that improve conditions on the ground for employers in every corner of New Mexico. This is your Chamber at work, turning advocacy into action, and action into results.

A STRONGER BUSINESS CLIMATE



We helped block costly mandates, advocated for tax clarity, and secured major investments in public safety, removing barriers to business growth.



A FUTURE-READY WORKFORCE

We expanded access to education and technical training helping build the talent pipeline for tomorrow's jobs.

NMCC FOUR PILLARS

INNOVATION AND DIVERSIFICATION



We championed initiatives that drive economic growth, expand industry diversity, and position New Mexico as a leading destination for innovation, entrepreneurship, and investment.



MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE

We championed funding and reforms to advance site readiness, water planning, and broadband access, core drivers of statewide economic expansion.

POLICY & ADVOCACY SUCCESSES

How NMCC Delivered on Pro-business Policy in 2025

In 2025, the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce collaborated closely with business leaders and policymakers to shape legislation fostering a stronger economy, a resilient workforce, and thriving communities. Our advocacy efforts, grounded in four strategic pillars — competitiveness, talent, innovation, and infrastructure — focused on supporting pro-growth legislation and preventing proposals that could increase costs, introduce legal uncertainties, or hinder innovation. Through active engagement at the Roundhouse, coalition-building, testimony in hearings, and legislative shaping, we achieved significant outcomes for New Mexico employers.

Your involvement empowered NMCC to turn ideas into action—driving policy.

Legislative Advocacy: A Strategic Approach to Policy Impact

Each year, the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce reviews and engages with hundreds of bills that affect the state's business environment, workforce, infrastructure, and innovation capacity. The legislation highlighted in this report reflects just a sample of our focused advocacy work during the 2025 session.

Through rigorous analysis, strategic partnerships, and consistent presence at the Roundhouse, we helped advance smart, pro-growth legislation while stopping proposals that would have increased costs, created uncertainty, or hindered economic progress. From protecting employers against costly mandates to strengthening New Mexico's workforce pipeline and modernizing infrastructure investment, our policy efforts delivered real results.

Cultivating a Stable and Competitive Business Environment

PROTECTING EMPLOYERS FROM UNFUNDED MANDATES

We opposed the proposed Paid Family and Medical Leave Act (HB 11), which would have imposed a costly new payroll tax on employers and employees. This bill passed the House but did not advance past the Senate Finance Committee.

SAFEGUARDING INNOVATION IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

We testified against the Artificial Intelligence Act (HB 60), which included vague and overreaching mandates that could have created liability risks for companies and stifled innovation. This bill did not pass.

ENSURING REGIONAL FLEXIBILITY IN WAGE POLICY

We opposed legislation to increase the statewide minimum wage (HB 246) without accounting for local cost of living differences, which would disproportionately impact small and rural businesses. The bill passed one committee, but did not advance further.

PREVENTING COSTLY LEGAL UNCERTAINTY

We opposed the “Green Amendment” (HJR 3), a proposed constitutional change that could have led to increased litigation and delays in permitting. The resolution did not pass.

DEFENDING ENERGY AFFORDABILITY AND BUSINESS GROWTH

We helped defeat SB 4, Clear Horizons & Greenhouse Gas Emissions, a bill that would have created broad new emissions mandates, increasing costs for energy-intensive sectors and deterring investment. This bill did not advance past the Senate Finance Committee.

Building a Skilled, Inclusive, and Thriving Workforce

EXPANDING ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SCHOOL SERVICES

We supported SB 387, Community School Fund & Framework, which funds wraparound services and strengthens school-community partnerships to reduce barriers to student success and workforce readiness. This bill was signed into law.

EMPOWERING TRIBAL EDUCATION INNOVATION

We backed SB 13, State-Tribal Education Compact Schools Act, which would allow Tribal communities to establish locally governed schools that honor their languages and traditions while promoting educational achievement and long-term economic participation. The bill passed both chambers, but was pocket vetoed by the Governor and did not become law.

ADDRESSING RURAL VETERINARY GAPS

We supported SB 8, Veterinary Medical Loan Repayment, creating a loan repayment program for veterinary professionals serving in rural areas. This bill was signed into law.



RAISING TEACHER COMPENSATION

We supported HB 156, increasing salaries for all levels of licensed school staff, helping attract and retain talent across New Mexico's education system. This bill was signed into law.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE MEDICARE FUNDING

We backed SB 88, which would establish a Medicaid Trust Fund, strengthening long-term funding for health care access across the state. This bill was passed and signed into law.

Budget Wins:

 **\$1.3B** HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

For FY26, New Mexico has allocated approximately **\$1.3 billion** from the general fund to higher education institutions and special schools, marking a **5% increase** over the previous fiscal year. This funding supports universities, community colleges, and special schools across the state.

 **\$4.76B** PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

For FY26, the New Mexico Public Education Department has proposed a budget of nearly **\$4.76 billion**. This funding aims to boost academic performance, improve attendance, raise graduation rates, and expand access to healthy school meals.

 **\$94M** SECURED FOR PUBLIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS

Your Advocacy Investment at Work

Every legislative achievement this year was driven by the active engagement of our members and the strength of our partnerships across the business community. From shaping forward-looking legislation and blocking detrimental proposals to securing vital funding, NMCC remains your trusted advocate at the Roundhouse, steadfast in ensuring that public policy fosters private-sector success and economic growth.

Driving Innovation and Economic Diversification

DEVELOPING TRADE INFRASTRUCTURE

We supported HB 19 to establish trade ports that expand access to markets and boost supply chain capacity across the region. The bill passed and was signed into law.

CREATING A STATE TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION DIVISION

We endorsed HB 20, which would create a dedicated state division to support high-growth industries and startups. The bill passed into law.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR AN AI TALENT PIPELINE

We advocated for HM 2, creating a legislative work group to study the role of artificial intelligence in education and workforce development. This memorial passed.

READYING SITES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We promoted SB 169 to prepare infrastructure-ready sites that attract business expansion and job creation. This bill passed and was signed into law.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO CAPITAL FOR LOCAL PROJECTS

We supported SB 170, which improves financing tools for infrastructure development through the New Mexico Finance Authority. The bill was signed into law.

Investing in Modern Infrastructure to Power Growth

PLANNING FOR LONG TERM

We supported HB 137, which directs investment in strategic water supply planning critical to business continuity and future growth. This bill passed and was signed into law.



Policy Committees: Member-driven Strategy

NMCC's Policy Committees served as the engine of our legislative strategy, bringing members together across industries to shape the 2025 Policy Agenda. These member-led committees met four times to provide the insights and direction that strengthened our advocacy and advanced real outcomes for New Mexico businesses. Our committees included:

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Championed strategies that supported innovation, expanded entrepreneurship, and contributed to efforts to diversify New Mexico's economy.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Helped shape reforms that better aligned education and training with employer needs, advancing programs that closed skill gaps and expanded access to career pathways.

ENERGY AND EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

Influenced energy policy that supported both traditional and renewable sectors, secured infrastructure investments, and reinforced New Mexico's position in the future of energy.

ENVIRONMENT, WATER AND LAND USE

Addressed business-critical issues including environmental regulation, water rights adjudication, and resource planning — ensuring member voices guided balanced policy outcomes.

HEALTHCARE

Advanced initiatives to improve healthcare affordability and access, while elevating the importance of building and sustaining a stronger healthcare workforce.

TAXATION AND REGULATION

Supported key reforms that simplified regulation, enhanced tax competitiveness, and created a more predictable environment for business investment and growth.

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING

Promoted policies that ensure access to land, water, and infrastructure, while supporting environmental stewardship and providing regulatory clarity for business growth.

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Strategy powered by members. Results driven by insight.

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A YEAR OF IMPACTFUL EVENTS

Connecting Leaders. Advancing Dialogue. Driving Progress.

Throughout the year, the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce hosted a series of events designed to bring business leaders, policymakers, and partners together to strengthen relationships, share ideas, and shape New Mexico's future. These gatherings gave members direct access to decision-makers, practical insight on policy and industry issues, and opportunities to engage with peers across the state.

Strategic Events That Delivered Value to Members

MEMBERSHIP RETREAT IN SANTA FE

Our annual retreat at Buffalo Thunder Resort & Casino kicked off with a networking golf tournament at Towa Golf Club. Members came together for strategic discussions around economic competitiveness and had the opportunity to build stronger relationships across industries and regions.

BUSINESS DAY IN SANTA FE: LEGISLATIVE ACCESS IN ACTION

At La Fonda on the Plaza, members heard directly from Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and legislative leaders about their priorities for the 2025 session.

Topics included workforce, energy, tax policy, and economic development. Presented in partnership with the New Mexico Hospitality Association, this event empowered members to bring their perspectives to the state's top policymakers.

BROADBAND SUMMIT: ADVANCING DIGITAL ACCESS

Held in October, our second annual Broadband Summit convened ISPs, tribal leaders, cooperatives, and business stakeholders to discuss funding, workforce, permitting, and disaster preparedness. The Summit spotlighted NMCC's role in promoting equitable broadband expansion as a foundation for statewide economic opportunity.



MEMBERSHIP RETREAT



BUSINESS DAY



BROADBAND SUMMIT



FOCUS AWARDS



2024 NATIONAL CIVICS BEE

CHAMBER NIGHT AT BALLOON FIESTA: CELEBRATING LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY

On opening night of the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, members, legislators, and officials gathered for an evening of connection and celebration. With support from Swire Coca-Cola, guests enjoyed a night of networking beneath a sky filled with glowing balloons and a captivating drone show.

RECOGNIZING POLICY LEADERSHIP: FOCUS AWARDS CELEBRATION

The NMCC FOCUS Awards celebrate legislative leadership that drives meaningful progress for New Mexico's economy and communities. This year's event recognized policymakers who championed forward-thinking legislation in key areas such as innovation, education, healthcare, public safety, and collaborative problem-solving.

Through these honors, NMCC highlights the critical role of bipartisan collaboration and visionary leadership in shaping a more competitive, inclusive, and resilient

New Mexico. The FOCUS Awards remain a cornerstone of our efforts to celebrate policy impact and strengthen partnerships between the public and private sectors.

Community Programs

2024 NATIONAL CIVICS BEE – INSPIRING FUTURE LEADERS

In partnership with the U.S. Chamber Foundation's Civic Trust, NMCC hosted the statewide Civics Bee at the University of New Mexico. Middle school finalists from across the state competed in this engaging event to promote civic knowledge and leadership among youth. This unique program reflects NMCC's commitment to building future-ready communities and strengthening civic engagement among the next generation.

More to Come

In the coming year, NMCC will expand its events portfolio to focus on regional engagement and innovation showcases across the state.



A CASE STUDY IN STATEWIDE COLLABORATION

Combating Organized Retail Crime in New Mexico

The New Mexico Organized Retail Crime Association (NMORCA) is a powerful example of how strategic collaboration and Chamber-led innovation can address urgent economic and public safety issues. Created and incubated by the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce, NMORCA illustrates the Chamber's role as a convener, problem-solver, and incubator of community assets.

NMORCA was launched in response to growing concerns about organized retail crime (ORC), which has impacted retailers across New Mexico and beyond. By bringing together business leaders, loss prevention professionals, and law enforcement agencies, the Chamber created a trusted space for shared insight, strategy, and real-time coordination.

At the heart of this initiative is a digital platform that enables retailers and law enforcement agencies to share incident data in real time — improving case development, strengthening prosecution, and deterring repeat offenses. NMORCA's impact also extends to the policy arena. The association supported the passage of House Bill 234, which allows the aggregation of stolen goods across multiple locations, effectively elevating organized retail theft to a felony-level offense.

The success of NMORCA highlights the power of the Chamber to incubate new solutions that serve both business and community needs. The Chamber's incubation process involved identifying a systemic challenge, building a coalition of engaged stakeholders, designing an operational framework, and aligning public-private resources to ensure sustainability. Today, NMORCA operates as a statewide hub for ORC prevention and advocacy — proof that with the right leadership and infrastructure, ideas can become institutions.

This case study reflects how the Chamber turns challenges into opportunities through thoughtful incubation, proactive leadership, and enduring partnerships that create long-term impact for New Mexico.

YOUR FOUNDATION AT WORK: SHAPING NEW MEXICO'S ECONOMIC FUTURE

New Mexico Chamber of Commerce Foundation

In FY25, the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce Foundation solidified its role as a key asset to the state's business community — advancing research, education, and strategic programming to foster long-term prosperity for all New Mexicans.

Our flagship initiative, Be Pro Be Proud New Mexico, continued to gain momentum, connecting students, educators, and industry leaders to high-demand skilled career pathways across the state. The success of this program underscores the Foundation's commitment to developing innovative, action-oriented solutions that address the state's most pressing workforce and economic challenges.

Building on this success, FY25 also marked a strategic pivot toward deepening our research capabilities. The Foundation is commissioning a new report focused on diversifying New Mexico's economy, with an emphasis on emerging industries. This study will offer actionable, data-driven recommendations to support pro-business policies and inform advocacy, partnerships, and statewide initiatives.

Recognizing the importance of sustainability and growth, the Foundation took a significant step forward in FY25 by initiating the establishment of its first-ever endowment. This milestone ensures that our ability to deliver independent research, statewide educational outreach, and economic development programming will continue to grow in scale and influence for years to come.

The NMCC Foundation has emerged as a powerful complement to the Chamber's policy and advocacy work — extending the Chamber's capacity to shape economic strategy and amplify the voice of New Mexico's business community. As we look ahead, the Foundation stands ready to define the next chapter of economic leadership and impact for our state.

Your continued partnership ensures that our shared vision for a stronger, more competitive New Mexico becomes a legacy.

SECURING NEW MEXICO'S WATER FUTURE: POLICY, PARTNERSHIP, AND PROGRESS

Building on a statewide symposia series, the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce Foundation hosted the New Mexico Water Policy Summit in partnership with Senator Roberto "Bobby" Gonzales and the Pueblo of Pojoaque. The event brought together more than 275 attendees from across the state to explore collaborative solutions for New Mexico's water future. Experts and policymakers discussed strategies for freeing up freshwater resources, advancing economic development, adopting new technologies, and ensuring long-term conservation.

Lieutenant Governor Howie Morales opened the summit, which featured insights from Cabinet Secretaries Jeff Witte (Agriculture), Rob Black (Economic Development), and Sarita Nair (Workforce Solutions), who spoke on the intersection of water, culture, and infrastructure. Rebecca Roose, Infrastructure Advisor to Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham, provided a key overview of the 50-Year Water Action Plan, anchoring the day's policy discussions.

State legislators, including Representatives Tara Lujan, Susan Herrera, Kristina Ortez, and Senator Pat Woods, actively contributed to panels throughout the summit. The event played a pivotal role in shaping water legislation passed during the 2025 session. By convening diverse voices and leadership from the business community, the Foundation established a powerful platform for advancing practical, forward-thinking water policy for New Mexico's future.



BE PRO BE PROUD NEW MEXICO

Building the Next Generation of Skilled Talent Together

In today’s fast-changing economy, New Mexico’s future depends on a workforce that is strong, ready, and skilled. Be Pro Be Proud New Mexico (BPBPNM) is answering that call by mobilizing career exploration for thousands of students while reshaping perceptions about technical and skilled professions.

Launched in November 2023, BPBPNM is a hands-on initiative designed to introduce students to high-demand, high-wage careers that do not require a traditional four-year degree. Its centerpiece is a 78-foot mobile workshop equipped with AR/VR simulators, allowing students to try their hand at a variety of skilled professions, from healthcare and robotics to welding and heavy equipment operation.

A Statewide Workforce Solution Powered by Members

More than a truck, this is a movement. Backed by Chamber members, industry sponsors, education institutions, and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, BPBPNM is bridging the gap between students, career opportunities, and employers across New Mexico.

Through this program, the Chamber is doing more than promoting career awareness. We are incubating the next generation of talent and closing the skills gap from the ground up. Together, we are building a future-ready workforce, one student at a time.

A Shared Commitment to Workforce Development

Be Pro Be Proud New Mexico is made possible by generous support from the following founding and sustaining partners:

- Meta
- ExxonMobil
- Public Service Company of New Mexico
- IBEW Local 611 – Electricians Union
- Associated General Contractors of New Mexico (AGCNM)
- Associated Builders & Contractors of New Mexico (ABCNM)
- Central New Mexico Community College (CNM)
- Freeport McMoRan
- Swire Coca-Cola
- Albuquerque Job Corps
- Wagner Equipment
- Walmart
- Coterra, Inc.
- NM Army National Guard

CAREERS SUPPORTED BY BPBPNM:

- Automation and Robotics
- CAD/CAM Drafter
- Carpentry
- CNC Machinist
- Commercial Truck Driver
- Diesel Technician
- Electrician and Electrical Line Worker
- Emergency Medical Technician and Paramedic
- Heavy Equipment Operator
- HVAC Technician
- Medical Assistant
- Plumber
- Welder

2024–2025 Impact Highlights

These numbers represent more than reach. They reflect lives inspired, futures redirected, and employers connected to tomorrow’s workforce.



MEET THE CHAMBER TEAM

The People Powering Progress Across New Mexico

At the Chamber, our strength lies in our people. This dedicated team brings together expertise in policy, communications, operations, and workforce development to serve our members and advance our state's economic future. Together, they embody the Chamber's mission to make New Mexico a leader in industry, innovation, and quality of life.



LEADERSHIP
Leslie Hielema
President & CEO



POLICY & ADVOCACY
Alison Riley
Vice President of Government Relations & Policy



PROGRAMS & OPERATIONS
Janae Gardner
Vice President of Programs & Operations



PROGRAMS & OPERATIONS
Theresa Burch
Administrative & Special Projects Coordinator



LEADERSHIP
Rob Leming
Foundation President & CEO



COMMUNICATIONS
Amythyst Marciano
Director of Marketing & Communications



EDUCATION
Benton Spradlin
Education Program Manager

MEET THE FOUNDATION TEAM

The NMCC Foundation is the education, research, and programming arm of the New Mexico Chamber of Commerce. By utilizing cutting-edge research and employing data-driven solutions, The Foundation endeavors to lift up all New Mexicans by improving our state's economic competitiveness.



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Gerald Weseen
NM Gas Company

David Williams
Meta

LOOKING AHEAD

Stronger Together,
Ready for More.

As we reflect on a year defined by bold leadership and tangible results, one truth is clear — our progress is powered by you.

Your voice shaped smarter policies. Your engagement built stronger connections. Your partnership amplified the Chamber’s influence across every region and industry in New Mexico.

Together, we turned challenges into momentum and ideas into action. We laid the foundation for a more competitive business climate, a future-ready workforce, and a diversified, resilient economy.

But our work is far from done.

Looking ahead, we are expanding our advocacy, strengthening our Foundation, and investing in new programs and partnerships that deliver even more value to our members. Every conversation, every connection, and every commitment move us closer to our shared goal: making New Mexico the best place to live, work, and do business.

Together, we transform bold ideas into action that strengthens New Mexico’s future.

PARTNER INVESTORS



PRINCIPAL INVESTORS



PREMIER INVESTORS



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