



Summer Camp for Job Creators

By Damon Scott for Finance New Mexico

The last day of a typical kid's summer camp is usually reserved for the wacky and fun talent show. Silver City's adult version, instead, culminates in the presentation of an economic development case study.

The New Mexico Economic Development Course at Western New Mexico University (WNMU) July 23 – 27 in Silver City offers much more than the title suggests. The intensive week involves a series of lectures, workshops, training, activities and instruction — all designed to motivate attendees toward one overarching takeaway: spur job creation in their communities.



2016 course participants; courtesy © Western New Mexico University

Noreen Scott is the course director and one of the members of the New Mexico Economic Development Council, the group that oversees the course content. Scott is eager to point out the longevity, and thus stability, of the intensive — it's been offered in Silver City since 1993, she said. But a lot has changed over the last 24 years.

“Speakers change,” said Scott, [and] economic development processes have evolved and changed.”

The speakers joining Scott for this year's course are a bit of a who's who in the world of economic development in the state, representative of many diverse experiences and disciplines. They include Dr. Miguel Vicens-Feliberty, associate dean of the School of Business at WNMU; Mark Lautman, founder of Lautman Economic Architecture; Jim Smith, vice president at CBRE Albuquerque; Pat Vanderpool, executive director, Greater Tucumcari Economic Development; and Savannah Jermance, economic development director for the city of Rio Rancho.

That's just a partial list. Also on board are representatives from the public relations industry, as well as speakers and trainers with unique specialties from Hobbs, Gallup, Las Cruces and Santa

Teresa. Topics range from “Researching Your Community,” to financing, ethics and how to use social networking for economic development.

While the speakers and trainers are from New Mexico, the event attracts participants from other states, according to Scott.

“The course is offered in 19 states including Texas, Arizona, Colorado and California,” she said. “In our region, however, the timing and quality of our program may draw from those areas, as well as from states [that] do not have a course — like Nevada, Utah and Wyoming.”

Scott said attendees will walk away from the week with a greater understanding of economic development techniques. “Participants will come away with ideas on how to grow their communities,” she said.

The course is open to all businesspeople, community leaders and “those interested in growing the economy in their communities,” said Scott.

And where better to experience summer camp-like activities than in Silver City? The artist community on the edge of the Gila Wilderness boasts an array of outdoor offerings. Participants will get a tour of historic downtown Silver City, eat dinner at the Jalisco Café, and enjoy a social and dinner at Adobe Springs Cafe. There’s even a pizza supper on the last night of the course, when attendees may be chowing down on slices while preparing their economic development case studies.

Enrollment is limited to 30 participants. For registration options and more information, visit <http://iaecondev.org/events/new-mexico-economic-development-course-in-state/>. Scott can be reached at (505) 710-7172.

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