



NEW MEXICO

TOURISM DEPARTMENT

Route 66 Centennial Coordination Group

3rd Quarter Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 29, 2024, 1:30 p.m.
Tucumcari Convention Center
1500 Route 66, Tucumcari, New Mexico 88401

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. by Chair Bill Lee.

Roll Call:

Commissioners Present:

Bill Lee (Chair)
Raymond Mondragon (Vice-Chair)
Evan Williams
Daniel Gutierrez
Secretary Ricky Serna
Deputy Secretary Danielle Gilliam
Elmer Torres
Alicia Ortega
Scott Verhines
Daniel Zillmann
Acting Secretary Lancing Adams

Commissioners not present:

Johnny Pena

Welcome and Introductions: **Chair Lee** – Thank you everybody for being here. I know many of you were here for this morning's stakeholder meeting. In fact, I think all of you were here. It's good to have you back for our afternoon session and meeting. We have a lot of great information to pass along and some decisions to be made by the committee here. I want to first recognize the folks who were here with us earlier, Mayor Mike Cherry from Tucumcari, thank you to Mayor Billie Jo Barnes from San Jon. With us still we have a County Commissioner, Brian Fortner. Brian, welcome and thank you. Would you like to say anything before we begin? **Commissioner Fortner:** Been a great day. Thank you everybody for coming, great job organizing everything, thank you. **Chair Lee:** As a recovering county commissioner I respect the job you do, Sir. Thank you very much. I also want to say thank you to Xcel Energy for participating and sponsoring lunch for us here today. Big thank you, this is a wonderful gift basket from the City of Tucumcari, from the folks at Main Street, thank you Connie the Tucumcari Chamber Tony and Christine, thank you very much. We appreciate it.

Approval of Agenda: Secretary Serna moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Member Gutierrez. Motion carried; none were opposed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Secretary Serna moved to approve the minutes of the December 12th meeting, seconded by Member Torres. Motion carried; none were opposed.

Update on Funding Opportunities in Fiscal Year 2025: Presented by Secretary Adams – I want to provide I think a really encouraging update from the legislative session. Going into the session, we were looking to secure dollars specific for Route 66 theme projects. I am happy to report, contingent on the signing of House Bill 2, which is the budget, it does allow for up to \$2.5 million dollars to be spent on Route 66 theme projects. \$2.5 million is, is really going to do a lot. As we go through this process as far as in recommending projects for endorsement, it's going to be incumbent on this group to sort of decide or think about what federal agencies, if we were seeking federal dollars would be responsible, whether it's federal DOT or the U.S. Treasury when it comes to coins or the Postal Service when it comes to stamps. So those are all things we're going to have to talk about, but again really encouraged by having the \$2.5 million. We will be working on how we're going to set up within the tourism department a grant program to distribute any of these resources. I just wanted to provide a really encouraging update for what we're going to have moving into fiscal year 25. **Member Verhines added:** I just wanted to share, I don't see Representative Chatfield here this afternoon, but he mentioned to me at the end of the legislative session that he had roughly just something shy of \$60,000 of his capital that he had intended to dedicate to this effort as well. I was hoping he might be here to share that with us personally. He did say it was OK for me to mention that to the group and I think more details to follow, he wanted to thank you. **Chair Lee:** That's wonderful news. The more the better. Thank you for sharing that information. He asked NMTD to follow up with the outlay request and see where things fall. That would be great. **Vice-Chair Mondragon:** I had the fortunate ability to be at the Senate Finance Committee meeting when Acting Secretary Adams presented the budget of the Tourism Department and certainly was supported by the commissioners there, of course the support by the Senate Finance Committee. We were kind of nervous about it at first not knowing what was going to come out of that. To hear the support of the Senate Finance Committee was very encouraging and Lancing did a good job in that presentation. **Chair Lee:** I would just like to weigh in and say great work was done by Lancing and his team in terms of advocacy. I also spent some time talking with Senate Finance Chair Senator George Munoz about increasing it. When the original budget from the House came over, it only had \$1 million in it, and we worked hard to see that we secured that other \$1.5 million. It's really a blessing and from what I understand, we may not be spending the most out of all the states involved in this Centennial celebration, but we are certainly up there and going to be very competitive with the marketing dollars that we've got.

Update on the U.S. Route 66 Commission: Chair Lee – This is something that we want to pay particularly close attention to. We want to stay in close contact with these folks at the Commission because these are the places where we're going to be able to elevate many of the ideas that we heard today and projects and things that come so that we get international attention as well as national attention for our projects here in New Mexico. Secretary Adams, I'll turn things over to you. **Secretary Adams:** A couple updates, I want to talk about the U.S. Route 66 Centennial Commission and the work that's being done with Brand USA who's essentially the tourism department that represents the United States and their work with that Commission. The Coordination Group has correspondence dated February 5th from the Commission, they opened their website, www.route66-centennial.com and called for ideas. There are 4 focus areas in which the Commission is looking at projects, Commemoratives and Publications, Infrastructure, Events and Celebrations, and International and National Marketing. On their website now, they have an intake form to take in projects and anyone can go into that process. I've had conversations with Commissioner Jen Schroer about this process and have been told that there will be a way in which the coordination group can submit projects and make sure that those projects that are endorsed by our coordination group are designated as such. I'd encourage you to go to the national commission's website to sign up for updates so that you can make sure to be in the know about what's going on. We want to be able to endorse projects, get those projects endorsed by the National Commission, really highlight the quality attractions, amenities, and experiences in New Mexico. Ultimately, we want to be able to make sure that we're running in parallel with what the Commission is doing. Wanted to provide a couple updates on Brand USA, again the group that advertises and promotes the country just like we do the state. They are very interested in promoting the Centennial to international travelers. They're looking at strategically planning this effort by driving awareness towards United States road trips as kind of an awareness piece,

following that up with storytelling about these different areas, including obviously New Mexico's section of Route 66. The New Mexico True brand is very big on storytelling. Working to make sure that all the states have sort of a cohesive itinerary that they can provide to travelers. They're going to be focusing on driving international awareness first, then engagement, then ultimately a visitation into 2026. Their phased strategy as of now, March of 2025 is when they really want to hit in terms of having all those productions done, having that media go out, and then being able to wrap that around then during the Centennial with specific Route 66 messaging. International markets that they're looking at are the UK, Germany, Australia, Canada, Mexico and Brazil. As we're moving forward with this project, wanted to just kind of give an overview of what's happening with the Commission, how they're working with Brand USA, how they're marketing the country and how that relates to our place, our, I think our very special and competitive place within that. We met with Brand USA a couple weeks ago. It was a great meeting with them, they're very excited about Route 66. Again, a huge opportunity for the eight states including us that are involved. **Chair Lee:** I would offer to the [group], please each [group] member visit the Centennial site and enter yourself for recent updates. They do a really good job of getting you timely information, which I think will be very valuable for each [group] member as we move forward.

Route 66 Project Recommendation & Scoring Process: Chair Lee – [Group] members, the Vice Chair and I have been working very closely with the tourism department to not only come up with the process for stakeholders' meetings but also to make sure that we are moving forward with a process that will make sense when it comes time to start scoring applications. While we don't have that piece of the application process put together yet, that will come very quickly and very soon. We're dealing with a department that does it very well through the tourism Co-op advertising program. They've been recognized for that process. We're going to make it something that's going to be very similar to that, very easy for stakeholders to access and utilize. As we look at it today, we focused on five critical areas, 1. consumer experiences, 2. special events, 3. marketing and promotion, 4. product development and 5. infrastructure. To go along with those things, we need to focus on areas that 1. celebrate & honor, 2. preserve, protect & enhance, 3. generate tourism demand, 4. tourism development, 5. economic development, 6. national collaboration and 7. research and education, all of this is needed for us to really elevate to a national and international level. Getting those key components into our scoring process is critical. We've got the 1. Commemoratives & publications, 2. events & celebrations, 3. international & national marketing and 4. Infrastructure, that must be tied back in. Then projects must come before this committee to be endorsed. Having that scoring piece in place is our first step to making sure that we're meeting those needs. Our next slide, those consumer experiences, those special events, all these things can meet and will cross paths in many ways. Kind of what we did here this morning, thinking about what I thought was a very brilliant idea to circulate people around to each different table, to experience what's going on in each one of those buckets if you will, where we are trying to meet needs and put together a good plan of attack. We know that we could have stayed in our silos and said, well, I'm only interested in the events. Well, your event may well rely on infrastructure and promotion. There are those intersecting places that we know exist. We want to make sure that we are covering all the bases and that we're giving stakeholders a chance to share in each one of those areas because so many things touch on each other and rely on each other. This kind of goes back to those areas that we talked about that need to be present for us to elevate to national status and international status.

Celebrate and Honor: Project honors and celebrates Route 66 by recognizing by promoting its unique history and culture. (Maximum of 10 points)

Preserve, Protect & Enhance: Project preserves, protects, and enhances the unique character of New Mexico's Route 66 Communities. (Maximum of 10 points)

Generate Tourism Demand: Project drives national and international tourism through the promotion of celebrations, commemorations, and other activities that honor Route 66. What does the event or project do to drive tourism to our state? (Maximum of 10 points)

Tourism development: Project serves to develop and sustain new and existing attractions that promote tourism along Route 66. Does it develop more tourism for us? (Maximum of 10 points)

Economic development: Project serves to increase and enhance the economic opportunities in New Mexico; specifically in communities along Route 66. (Maximum of 10 points) What is the economic impact going to be?

National Collaboration: Project compliments the national identity of Route 66 through collaborative elements that tie in other states along Route 66. (Maximum of 10 points)

Research & Education: Project provides educational opportunities for residents and visitors to learn and explore the history of Route 66 in New Mexico. (Maximum of 10 points)

Project Feasibility & Readiness: Project can be successfully completed before the Route 66 Centennial in 2026; additionally, the community/organization has the capacity to sustain the project. (Maximum of 15 points) Where are you in the project, are you ready to go?

Community Support: Project is supported by local government, local businesses, or other community stakeholders. (Maximum of 15 points)

These are the critical criteria that we have, a maximum of 100 points. I would like to have some input from the [group] and discussion around this. If you like what you see, great, if you have ideas or suggestions, we'd certainly welcome those. If we can come to consensus here today around this scoring process, then we can begin to move on the grant applications rather quickly and get those pushed out so that we start utilizing that funding to get the projects up and running as quickly as we possibly can. I know many of you may have some questions, comments or thoughts and I would open the floor to the [group] members. **Member Gutierrez:** Mr. Chair, with this, are we talking about elevating projects to the National in terms of recommending things to the National Centennial Commission or are we talking about the funding that's being funneled through the tourism department? I just want to make sure I'm clear. **Chair Lee:** Great, great question. The answer is yes and yes. We know, not every project is probably going to be elevated to national status, but it's something that's good for New Mexico and we want to see that it gets its fair share of funding as well. This scoring process will apply to not only that, but if we get a project that comes to us that really resonates on all those levels and we say, wow, this is this is the one that we need to make sure it gets put into the pipeline for the national recognition, then we can immediately do that as well. But it doesn't mean, if you don't fill all those buckets that your project would necessarily not be funded or pushed by us on a state level or recommended by us on a state level. Does that answer your question?

Member Gutierrez: Yes. **Chair Lee:** Yes, Lancing. **Secretary Adams:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the Tourism department's side, we're trying to do two things that are unique but efficient. The National Commission is going to exist and it's going to be there to promote New Mexico as part of that international audience giving them those experiences, the itinerary they need. These criteria are tied to, except for project readiness and community support directly to the National Commission Spring. That is why the five go into four because there are 4 buckets ultimately that the national has. We want to make sure that we're providing projects that are in step with what the Commission wants. Now on the state side, we do want to, as we're going to be developing this grant program, look to how do we borrow from what is working for the National Commission and sort of bake that in, if you will, to our process so that these criteria exist as well as far as that scoring. They are kind of two tracks, but they sort of intersect. **Chair Lee:** I think this guideline also provides that to stakeholders who are going to be looking at trying to access this funding in this, this pot of money for what they need to accomplish to make their event, their project, their proposal shine that much more. I would like to see New Mexico have the most elevated projects to the national level that we drive that bus that says hey, we're the biggest and best here, but we need to have these criteria put in place so that we can move those applications forward. **Vice-Chair Mondragon:** Mr. Chairman, if I may, when we reviewed the proposed criteria, having an economic development background, the one that excited me the project feasibility & readiness and community support at 15 is important. To give you an example, at this point with the work that we've done with Christine, Connie, the city manager, and the county manager there is no doubt in my mind that the community support is here and could carry it, it is going to be amazing. I like the fact that community support is at 15 points. The project feasibility & readiness, are we ready for this? Can it be completed? It's obvious by us meeting with these folks, the elected leaders, the discussions we had during lunch with the elected leaders that joined us, there's no doubt about it. I like the 15-point criteria for project feasibility and the rest at 10 points, a maximum of 100 points, certainly gives you in my opinion a good, proposed scoring criteria for this type of project. **Chair Lee:**

Thank you, Mr. Vice Chair. I agree with that. The other thing that I think that we need to keep in mind as we're weighing these programs, these projects is the sustainability side too. I think that comes through that community support piece and I think that comes through the feasibility and readiness. Can you launch? Can you make it not only ready to go for 2026 but, are we ready to go and we can start building toward that? We heard some great ideas today. One of the ideas I heard as I was moving from table to table is let's put up signs that say celebrating 100-year anniversary in 2026 underneath the Route 66 sign. It's a great idea. I don't know what it really looks like fleshed out, but those are the kinds of ideas that I think can come forward now and we can move and act on now to drive toward the Centennial celebration. We must again have that piece in place. When I talk about sustainability, I'm talking about events that are going to go well beyond the Centennial, right? Mother Road has survived 100 years, I'd like to see it go 100 more. We need events, programs, projects that are going to highlight not only now and the 100-year celebration, but we'll be able to carry on and provide economic impact into these areas across our state. Not only for the 100-year celebration throughout the year of 2026, but let's be visionary and talk about what kind of mileage are we going to get out of our tank here with the money we're going to spend on down the road. I think that's critical that we look at that as part of this. I think that comes into play in terms of the feasibility of readiness and community support piece there. I think that's why we weighed in to say those need to be scored a little bit higher. **Secretary Adams:** Mr. Chairman, I think going through this morning was helpful for us as we're moving fast, you know, fast and furious, but trying to make sure we're being effective and efficient. I think the word criteria here kind of semantically matters because this is maybe a criterion but a process is still yet to be fully fleshed out. I think looking today, there was maybe more of an expectation of everything is already kind of in a project package. I think today what we found is there are some of that, but there's a lot of just great ideas that maybe need to be enveloped, enveloped into a package. I think as far as the process goes, we're still going to need to work on figuring out how do we, you know, identify what a project is before we score it. I do think you know for discussion the criteria for scoring, it makes a lot of sense and obviously we're open for any discussion on that. I just wanted to draw that nuance between the criteria and potentially look at the process by which we move forward after going through the stakeholder. **Secretary Serna:** I'm just looking at this, I like the connection with the previous slides that kind of go from the project concept. I'm wondering and I'm not concerned yet because I'm just trying to think it out of my head. If someone has a project with a focus on research and education a clear focus, they can only get a possible score of 40. If a project that's focused on research and education, it could have maximum community support and maximum project feasibility and readiness with a focus on research and education it's top score would be 40 and the same if somewhat you know and without elements that address the other criteria. It might not fare well against other projects that are a little bit more spread across the other criteria. I'm trying to kind of wrangle with whether the projects are bucketed, you know in terms of what other project concept items it addresses. Then they're then scored on project feasibility and readiness, community support, perhaps even matching funding support, from other areas. I just have a concern that if you know someone has a project with a very strong focus on any one of the criteria outside of project feasibility, readiness can be supported because those two last ones that are 15 points, they span across all project types. But if you have a project that's just really focused on research and education, then you can't get a 50% unless you really start to make connections across other pictures. Maybe that's what we're forcing on forcing folks to do, I'm not sure. **Member Verhines:** Mr. Chairman, I had similar questions. I think, you know, I can envision different levels of projects where, for example, a community has a project that they're going to take on themselves, but then would be supported by the promotional efforts of the state's umbrella. How would that fall? The other question I had was just on constraints, possible constraints on the use of public funds for private kinds of effort. I just wondered if that's been discussed, or we've been thinking about that along the same lines. **Chair Lee:** Lancing, did you want to weigh in on any of that? **Secretary Adams:** I think this is a great discussion and we had this as discussion with possible action and I'm totally comfortable with that. We just really wanted to start the discussion on how the scoring process is going to work out as we move forward. To Secretary Serna's point, great point, we might have something that's specifically research related, and it doesn't have anything to do with tourism or history or maybe any of these other things. That's a great point and what's the hypothetical in which you know that project doesn't get any support.

Going back to, what we're trying to needle we are trying to thread, is we're just trying to make sure that whatever we're putting forward is within the structure of what the National Commission's is.

Secretary Serna: And to expand on, the other point too is if we receive projects that support private businesses, private business development, growth expansion etcetera, are we OK with supporting those projects with, you know, the public appropriation for \$2,000,000. I think we have got to make sure that's OK as well. Otherwise, we could be looking at projects that are, applications that go to local governments, that then can go out from there. I don't know, am I saying we're kind of, taking the money from a state appropriation to a local entity to private entities. I don't know if that's OK, but I think that's something that's important as well. There may be an expectation to say is it attached to a public entity so legally we can send that money.

Chair Lee: I think that's by and large how the Co-op grants work in many, many instances from the department, it comes out to a local public body and then gets distributed out much as you would for like a lodger's tax application. The public body that controls lodgers' tax then allocates those dollars out. I would argue that research and education piece could be something that does generate tourism demand. Will it generate tourism development, right. Does the data and research show that the educational piece is going to help us develop things in the future? And you know certainly if it's educational or is it part of the preservation of the Route 66 route.

I would think that if I were to push back, I would think you could find those elements in a good project that would get you well beyond that 50% mark, that's how I would look at it, but maybe I'm seeing things much different.

Secretary Serna: Mr. Chairman, I like the push back. It's a good point. But what it could be, right, which means that we're going to have a research and education project, but now the scope needs to include marketing to increase visitor spending locally. It needs to include these pieces. We're almost saying that you fare better when the project gets wider to include elements, right, that bring in the other criterion scoring. If we do, you know, national collaboration, you know there too, right? If it's research and education, the applicant is saying, how do I tie this to another state and what they're doing. Does that portion of the project scope now make it more expensive, make it less ready or create local concern. Both are just thoughts, but I think it could go either way for sure.

Member Williams: Just from being on the other side of the table a lot the tourism and I understand the difference between tourism demand, tourism development and economic development. I think we're checking against applications that kind of redefine the same thing three times. I would rather see a bucket that sends demand and development and allows 30 points but allows them to focus on the aspect that really takes their project and leads to demand and development aspects. I think, you know folks that apply for these things, you're going to hear tourism development is economic development. You're going to end up with three answers that are very similar and it's going to be harder to score. I think if you have flexibility in that category and about 30 points if it's really well crafted. Maybe it's just economic development or maybe it's just tourism demand, but it's worth 30 points. That would just be a little thing. I really like what the staff has done. I think this is a lot of work for six weeks since we last met and I think it's better to have a target sooner than later and lots of on ramps into this process and I like that we're still going to be talking about process and I for me it's always about form of function of what's really the function of that money and what we're trying to do as a [Group]. That would be my comments on this proposal, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Serna: Given my kind of the lens to which I see this, I'm wondering where infrastructure investments fit, I'm working on the preservation the protection of a lot of the discussion around signage, broadband expansion, essentially creating spaces, infrastructure, space for visitors. I'm trying to kind of piece together where that might best fit in some of the scoring criteria.

Chair Lee: I think it does fall into that preserve, protect & enhance piece as well certainly. What I'm hearing is that maybe we need to go back in. That's why we're putting everybody at the tables for discussion. And so, we need to. I like the idea of combining those three elements, the main development and economic development, 30 points and letting people rather than having to regurgitate the same thing three times in an application. I think that makes a lot of sense. I think that finding a way to maybe look at making sure that when we say preserve protected enhanced and maybe a sub point of that committee member Serna is on infrastructure right. And that we look to find a way somewhere to include research and educational research data and educational projects that may rise to the top as well. And how they fit into that that framework from the national side and still make the points work here. I mean and maybe it's as simple as including those things underneath as bullet points like celebrate and

honor, like wherever we can look there, where it makes sense to make sure that those things are highlighted in those areas. And what I'd like to do is, and I'm going to get clarification from Novela, our counsel down there. Are we able to circulate this in an e-mail form for everybody to make comment on and revise and then take action at the next committee? **Novela Salazar:** Yes, they can make comments and send them to me directly. We can't make, what can't do is have a rolling quorum. So, I can circulate it and then and I can compile something and then we can get something back out and we can do another meeting, like we've done here and try and take action again. **Chair Lee:** Does that make sense to everybody to try and put this back out there. We'll talk about this then at our next [group] meeting and also hopefully by that next [group] meeting, we'll also have maybe the opportunity in terms of working to circulate a draft that would also be how you apply, it's a grant application basically. How do you apply? Maybe we'll have that ready for circulation as well so that we can put that out, repeating it as well and give the [group] members a chance to look at it before we get to the meeting, discuss that as well. But all discussion that we do on this as we work through it should not be coming through me. It should be going through you. Right? **Novela Salazar:** Right. I'm just, we just all have to be, you know, wary of creating a rolling quorum within the group. So, I think, yeah, it's just look out for communication from me or Bill, but let's not group together multiple members [discussing group business]. **Chair Lee:** Thank you. **Secretary Adams:** Mr. Chairman. I think what staff from the [tourism] department can do from this meeting is take the comments from this meeting, incorporate them into maybe some options for the next meeting. So that it's nothing that will be discussed that wasn't discussed today. But from that discussion maybe we can just come up with some additional options, provide those. And even if we don't get there at the next meeting, I think we're going to get closer. **Novela Salazar:** That we can present in an open meeting. We just have to keep it in mind, have a resolution for an open meeting. We can't take any action outside. **Member Williams:** Mr. Chairman, along that point. I think it would be helpful to take some of the examples we heard today and actually like figure out how that's going to work going through this. **Novela Salazar:** Absolutely. **Member Williams:** I think until you walk something through, you don't realize how it's going to feel. Through that process we heard some great projects and I think it's today, uh, walking a couple of those like couple infrastructure things, a couple of the other categories that I'm sorry I only sat at one table, but I think walking it through the staff walk it through and just see where maybe some of the flaws might be. I think that would be helpful. **Chair Lee:** I think that's a good idea. Is everybody comfortable with doing that? All right. Any further discussion on this, if you have an idea or something that comes up, please make note of it. We'll revise this, send it out with options as you said, maybe things to look at and then come up here next [group] meeting to share those thoughts and hopefully we can, if not get there all the way, we're a lot closer. This is good, this started the process. Again, thanks to everybody who worked diligently to come up with just the beginning to get something out there so that we could discuss things I think is important. I thank the [group] for their valuable input and that's why you're all on here because everybody's got something to contribute, and I thank you for that time and that thought.

Stakeholder Meetings/Group Plan: **Chair Lee** – Again, this is for possible action from the committee. So, we're looking at when our next meetings will be and how things will take place. I thought it was important that we get all of the stakeholder meetings wrapped up well before we get to the new year, before we get to 2025. What you see here is a plan of attack that would do that. Means that we will have to as a committee double up in a couple of cases. What we are proposing here is that we would have our next stakeholder meeting on May 21st in Santa Rosa. That would be just a stakeholder meeting not a committee meeting because committees meeting quarterly. Right on the heels of that less than 30 days later, we would have another stakeholder meeting combined with a committee meeting just as we did here in Tucumcari, those would be in Albuquerque on June 18th, so May 21st, Santa Rosa stakeholder meeting and then June 18th would be the Centennial Coordination Group and stakeholder. Moving into quarter #3. We would then go to Santa Fe, date is to be determined. We can propose those at the June 18th meeting. We can propose when we're going to meet for quarter three and for quarter four. Quarter 4 we'll meet in Grants/Gallup, we are combining those two communities and we'll be meeting in Grants and folks from Gallup will come to Grants for that meeting if they want to. Again, I would point out that all of these stakeholder meetings as well as our [group] meetings are

open to the public. We encourage people from everywhere to come. We have people from Albuquerque and Santa Fe here today appreciate their attendance. I'm hoping that folks from Tucumcari will follow and come with us down to Santa Rosa and share their ideas, maybe even add to things. Are there questions or concerns about what's being proposed here for the rest of the year in terms of committee and stakeholder meetings? **Secretary Serna:** Just one question is, I've had some discussions with other communities that might be interested in in hosting and so is do you, is it possible, should we, should we acknowledge that these will be the meetings that we have or is there a possibility to leave others in there if, you know, there's appetite for a local option? **Chair Lee:** Yes, I suppose we could. We need to be looking at those. My thought is the availability of everybody on this committee to get there and do that. The idea behind what we put here was to make it accessible for people to get to some place that's close to them. We, you know, we didn't meet at San Jon, but we met in Tucumcari. We're not meeting in Gallup and Grants, we're meeting in Grants, that kind of thing. We're trying to make it something that we can get to easily for everybody, but it's accessible for everybody without too much distance to travel. At the same time get things wrapped up by the fourth quarter. **Secretary Serna:** That's a good point. **Secretary Adams:** Mr. Chairman, Secretary & Chairman, I will say, too, I think the executive order calls for at least 5 stakeholder meetings, which we just need to make sure we're compliant with. But I think it's up to us if we want to do it. I think it's just a question of everybody's time, capacity, and availability. If there was another community that really wanted to do that, I think it's parameters to at least discuss it. **Chair Lee:** The next thing I would say regarding this and especially the stakeholder meetings you saw this today is that this is administratively we are attached to the Tourism Department, and I appreciate the entire work of the tourism team to come here today really are shorthanded or maybe no handed back in the office in Santa Fe. There is the possibility of us being able to lift some of this the work off them because they are going to be focusing on other important pieces of this. Like we said, the scoring criteria that we're going to be giving input into the grant application process, those sorts of things. They just want us to be cognizant of the human resource side of this and stretching a department that also has to do all of the marketing for the state to do even more. And so with that, they've done a wonderful bit of work here, but there is an in state facilitator who is looking at being available to help facilitate the stakeholder meetings moving forward so that we don't put it all on the backs of the Tourism Department and we have the funding for this. Is there any thought about that from this committee in terms of moving forward for the department? **Secretary Adams:** Mr. Chairman, I would just say if we could have some in state group assist this coordination group in terms of facilitating meetings, I think it would be obviously very helpful for us. But ultimately you know based on the executive order in this coordination group we wouldn't feel good about moving forward on that for the purposes of this group unless we had the approval of this group. **Member Gutierrez:** Yes, Chairman. When you're saying funding's available was that through the Tourism Department? The Economic Development Department industry program, we have a lot of contractors too. If there's any way we can assist, we are totally open, and I have one contractor that is our promotional specialist that's already working with our Mainstreet communities on this. They've been meeting since early last year and can certainly provide some help. We're totally open to help with contributing. **Secretary Serna:** I'd like to kind of just challenge, I think we've got 5 state agencies here altogether. Maybe what we can do is work on identifying a few staff at each agency that could work with your office on logistics, coordinating, planning, set up, the whole thing. If need be, kind of facilitators, Tucumcari came out you know and this was a good-sized group, there's no question about that. If you double this in Santa Fe and Albuquerque, it could become pretty chaotic, we're going to need more than double the volunteers, maybe the state agencies can come with people two or three stacked. **Chair Lee:** I think that would be beneficial even above getting another professional facilitator on board. Because I think you're right. I think this is going to do nothing but grow, at least that's my hope is that this continues to grow. Tucumcari and San Jon certainly this region certainly set the bar high. We're hoping we get this kind of participation moving forward. I guess I'm asking would the committee be OK if the tourism department went ahead and looked for that outside facilitator, an in-state provider, somebody who understands New Mexico but would still alleviate some of the stress on your department and service and resources. **Vice-Chair Mondragon:** Mr. Chairman, if I may, I think it's really important that we have such facilitator, it's really important to keep us moving forward and as Secretary Serna mentioned and is if they're able to provide resources

from their departments that's really going to help Secretary Adams. I would recommend that we move forward with that recommendation. **Chair Lee:** So, is that in the form of a motion? **Vice-Chair Mondragon:** I make a motion that we move forward with a facilitator to the tourism department as needed. **Member Williams:** Second. **Secretary Serna:** Mr. Chair, just kind of the point where I know that that's not listed as an action item. So, we may not want to. **Chair Lee:** It is, it is a discussion or action under stakeholders. **Novela Salazar:** So, it would specifically be for this stakeholder and group plan. That's why it's under possible action and it's just brought up under specifically for this. That would only be for this type of planning. For example, rather than you sending me all your criteria ideas, we could use it also for that - they would be compiling everything, draft reports and help with facilitating the meetings. So that's what we would be using them for. They're just making the motion very specifically. **Secretary Serna:** Mr. Chair, it's approving the group plan with recommendation that tourism secure a facilitator? **Chair Lee:** Correct. **Action:** Motion was made by Vice-Chair Mondragon to approve the ground plan with the recommendation that Tourism secure a facilitator, seconded by Member Williams, motion was carried.

Next Meeting: Chair Lee – So, committee members take note that the next meeting is going to be a stakeholder meeting only on May 21st in Santa Rosa. Does anybody see any possible conflicts yet? Because while I know we're not having a committee meeting, I certainly think it's beneficial for each of the committee members to be there. I learned a lot today, heard a lot of great ideas. I would like to see us stay actively engaged and involved in the process. While we can do the stakeholder meetings without committee there, we'd certainly like to see as many of us as possible participate again on the 21st of May for that stakeholder meeting in Santa Rosa. Does most everybody think they can make it, *committee nods yes*, great. The New Mexico Route 66 Centennial Coordination Group meeting, our committee meeting and then the third stakeholder meeting would be in Albuquerque on June 18th. So, mark your calendars accordingly committee members we look forward to that.

Public Comment: Chair Lee – Would like to open the floor to public comment, just raise your hands and please remember to direct everything to the chair and the committee.

Johnny Meyer, Past President of the New Mexico Route 66 Association: First, thank you, Mr. Chairman and committee for allowing this time for public comment. I want to make a comment. A question, two more comments. My name is Johnny Meyer, and I was president of the New Mexico Route 66 Association during the 75th anniversary of Route 66. OK, first comment. It was mentioned some of the other states are allocating money for the Centennial. I know that Illinois has set aside \$6.6 million, 6.6. That's a good number 6.6. Oklahoma has also set aside an allocation for the Centennial. Guess what, that amount was \$6.6 million. So, I think that's probably a good goal for this state \$6.6 million. So that's comment number one. Question number one, do you anticipate seeking more funding in the next legislative session? Question to the chairman? **Chair Lee:** Absolutely. Why wouldn't we ask for more? **Johnny Meyer:** Well, I'm glad to hear that we can get towards that \$6.6 million. OK. Let me see. Wanted address on issue that was brought up concerning sort of the four compartments or the criteria and particularly on your observation about education. I'm a former adjunct professor at Union. I'm not boxed into one compartment and with regard to education, if I was writing a grant, I think there is marketing component to that, and an example is I think all the business owners here are to be concerned as ambassadors for Route 66 interfacing with the public. So, the more educated they are about the history and about the things here in New Mexico that are offered to the visitor, the more successful, the more economic impact that would give you. In terms of education, that could be packaged as conferences and seminars that would bring people to maybe Tucumcari and educate the ambassadors. So, I think you can sort of spread out over those compartments and enhance your score. Let's see here, there was some concern about using public money channeled to private businesses and I think that kind of invokes the notion of anti-donation clause. I think most of us know that that can be dealt with. I mean if you're distributing monies, if it's through a contract and there are deliverables to the contract, my understanding is there's no issue there. Would that be correct, Mr. Chairman? **Chair Lee:** Without being able to completely look at how anti donation works; I know that there are ways that we can make this work. As I stated earlier in the meeting through the Co-op

advertising fund which the department runs, we're able to see things like this happen. **Johnny Meyer:** Yes, yes. Thank you for giving me this time. **Chair Lee:** Thank you, Mr. Meyer. Some good points.

David Nidel, on behalf of the New Mexico Route 66 Association: I'm David Nidel. I'm here on behalf of the New Mexico Route 66 Association. I was one of the charter members that helped start it in 89 and one of my big concerns and I mentioned this to Acting Secretary Adams is that we haven't had a Route 66 sign survey done in over 3 decades. I mean literally since 1992, 1993. I think it's imperative that we do that and possibly get on to that first. I'd be willing to help either work with DOT to go back in the records or whatever to see how that was inventoried and where those surveys are. You know that a lot of signs have been taken as collector items or damaged through, you know just road wear and everything like that. Also, to fix or repair the identification signs over the freeways in terms of where Route 66 is, or where the off ramp is for getting on Route 66, whether it's the current configuration or pre-1937. I just want to thank the chair and the committee for having this meeting for us and inviting us all here and in any way that I can help, I'd like to do so. Thank you. **Chair Lee:** Mr. Nidel, thank you for being here and for that valuable input. I know there was a lot of conversation around signage over there today and I think it's important. I think every member of this committee thinks it's important. The Cabinet Secretary of Transportation, Ricky Serna and I had a conversation on the sidebar about it. So, thank you for bringing that. We appreciate it.

Randi Jo Eidsmoe, Owner of Rockabilly Raven Vintage: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Randi Jo Eidsmoe, I'm a business owner here in Tucumcari, I just want to thank you all very much for today. My main concern, which I just wanted to bring up that I didn't hear today, is that when we are talking about our international tourism, I did notice that we didn't include our friends and neighbors in Japan. They are a big tourism draw to the southwest specifically. So, I just want to put that at least on New Mexico's radar that this is a group of people that come to spend money in our state, and we would do well to make sure that we are gearing some of our tourism information and dollars their way. And to second that we also need to be cognizant that a lot of our tourists do not speak English or English is decidedly not a second or third language. And perhaps again, I didn't hear this in our conversations today. QR codes or some way for a more comfortable language accessibility option might be a big draw for our state if our tourists know that they can come and enjoy our attractions and not have to fight to understand what they are looking at, reading, and enjoying. So that was all. Thank you, Chairman for your time. Thank you all for coming to Tucumcari. I hope that you enjoyed your day as well. **Chair Lee:** Thank you, it was a great day. So, the countries that were listed were just those were what Brand USA is targeting. That doesn't mean that we can't look at other ways to reach other outside international markets. So, thank you for that input. We appreciate it.

David Brenner, Owner of Roadrunner Lodge Motel: Hello, I'm David Brenner. I own Roadrunner Lodge Motel here in Tucumcari. Quick question for you. Well, first, thank you Chairman and committee for coming out and giving us your time and putting together this, this stakeholder event. On the stakeholder front, I would like to know how many of you have at least 25% stake in your livelihood on Route 66 activity? OK, we've got 1 1/2, OK. And from the room, how many of you have at least a 25% stake in Route 66 activity? OK. A good number of us, right. So, you've got the right people in the room for this. Right. So, thank you for that. You're going to see that as you go through each of these communities. How many of you availed yourselves of the hospitality options in Tucumcari last night? *Several Committee members hands raised.* Excellent. How did you find them to be? **Chair Lee:** I'm saving my comment for later. **David Brenner:** OK, Wonderful, wonderful. We've got a thumbs up over here from Danielle and Lancing. I see one. Yes. All right. Thank you very much. I hope you do share your experiences with each other. You're going to see similar experiences along Route 66 because when you stay at a vintage property on Route 66, it's not the same as going to a Marriott. It's not the same as going to a Hilton. You're not getting powdered eggs for breakfast. You are not getting the same, you know, whatever it is, you're going to have a very different experience. I tell my employees when I hire them, we don't sell a place to sleep. We sell an experience. That's what people are looking for when they do a Route 66 trip. Thank you.

Chair Lee: Thank you, Dave. Appreciate your comments.

I did say I was going to save some comments here for the end. And I will tell you that I stayed at the Roadrunner Lodge last night. I had a conversation with David, sidebar with him earlier and what I appreciate was not only is the room like, cool, it takes you back in time. It's Route 66 through and through, but I appreciate the work that goes into it from a business owner standpoint, from the Chamber of Commerce guy standpoint. It's those things that we may take for granted that really make things shine. So, when I walked into the room, radio's on and it's an old NBC Radio program that I'm hearing. Not today's, it wasn't P. Diddy coming out of the radio. I can tell you that. I'm an old broadcaster at heart as well, I don't want to get into how old I am. But I did 30 years of radio and television, that was the first thing that caught my attention. Everything, every corner I turned, brought back a memory, I told David. I went across Death Valley with my mom in a 68 Rambler with no air conditioning. I remember the old floorboard floor bins, right? That's where I went and got down on the floorboard so the air could come in over the top of me. But everywhere I turned, those kinds of memories were coming back and the attention to detail was amazing. So, I just want to give you kudos right down to the Santa strip on the toilet. You don't see that anymore. It was like way cool. So, thank you David, to you and your staff. Great hospitality. And not only that, but we ate not once but twice on Route 66. The food was incredible at both places. Tucumcari's hospitality has been incredible. Thank you very much. We are all partners in this. We're all going to work to get it as good as we can possibly get it, make New Mexico shine and make sure that the Mother Road gets its due, which is to celebrate it in style for its 100th anniversary. So, thank you committee members for making the journey. I know this is incredibly good weather that you made today, but I hope to see you all in Santa Rosa for our next meeting and our next stakeholder get together. And with that I would entertain a motion to adjourn.

Adjourn: Motion was made by Member Torres to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Deputy Secretary Gilliam, motion was carried. Chairman Lee adjourned the meeting at 2:44 p.m.

Approved by Commission vote at public meeting held on September 17, 2024.



Commission Chair Bill Lee