

# NEW MEXICO *True*

## New Mexico Tourism Commission Meeting

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September 10, 2020 – 2:30 pm

### Call to Order:

Meeting was called to order at 2:32pm by Jennifer Kimball.

### Roll Call:

#### Commissioners Present:

Chairwoman Jennifer L. Kimball  
Commissioner Jay Chris Stagg  
Commissioner George Brooks  
Commissioner Tania Armenta  
Commissioner Scott Hutton  
Commissioner Belia Alvarez  
Commissioner Emerson R. Vallo

Commissioners not present: N/A

### Approval of Agenda:

The motion was made by Commissioner Stagg to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Armenta, and passed unanimously.

### Approval of Minutes from June 25, 2020:

The motion was made by Commissioner Stagg to approve the minutes from the June 25, 2020 meeting, seconded by Commissioner Brooks, and passed unanimously.

### 2020 Open Meetings Act (OMA) Resolution:

The motion was made by Commissioner Stagg to approve the 2020 Open Meetings Act Resolution (Resolution # 02-2020) as presented, seconded by Commissioner Armenta, and passed unanimously.

### Outdoor Industry:

George Brooks with Ski New Mexico asked for an Outdoor report to be given to keep everyone updated on what is going on in the Outdoor Industry as it is a part of tourism. Axie Navas was not in attendance at the meeting to give the update.

### NM Safe Certified:

Jason Espinoza with NM Safe Certified presented what the NM Safe Certified program is about and how it trains NM businesses in COVID- Safe Practices to ensure all of us- customers, employees, and families-

remain safe as NM reopens for business and recreation. With NM Safe certified, they want business to know they are not alone in navigating in this new environment and customers to know they can feel confident about visiting these businesses in a COVID-positive world. To date in 95 locations, there are 2,344 business enrolled, 757 are certified. Benefits of being NM Safe Certified include: businesses are aligned with the visible NM Safe Certified brand, digital advertising credit with NM Magazine, presence on [www.nmsafecertified.org](http://www.nmsafecertified.org) business directory, access to the NM Safe Certified Business toolkit and increased lodging capacity.

**NMTD Update:**

Secretary Schroer welcomed everyone for being in attendance of the NMTD 1<sup>st</sup> quarter Commission Meeting. Secretary Schroer reflected on the tourism economy, and what's been happening since the coronavirus crisis began and where we are now. She talked a little bit about where we started in 2020 stating that we really entered 2020 on a high note with visitor spending up since 2015 by 18% with nine years of record-breaking growth. Tourism is a huge job creator per capita in the state, we are the second fastest growing job market in our state right after oil and gas. With \$737 million in 2019 state and local taxes, we are building our communities. She thanked the tourism industry and workers. Secretary Schroer highlighted specifically Albuquerque for the annual percentage growth in 2019 compared to 2018, which was in the KPI top 10 in the country.

**NMTD Research - Victoria Gregg:**

Mrs. Gregg reported on the many studies of the research and data that she and her team have conducted that are completed or are ongoing currently within the tourism department. A tourism employment study looking specifically by sector at tourism employment within the state and within the competitive set data from 2008 was considered to determine how the industry might recover post-COVID. The data shows for 2008 there was a 4-5-year recovery window for the hardest hit industries, with some recovering much faster than others. Tourism, arts, and entertainment recovered the fastest, while retail saw the slowest recovery.

**Marketing:**

Secretary Schroer spoke about the various campaigns within the department that are going on and as to why tourism department partnered with industry to launch the New Mexico safe promise. Secretary Schroer announced an expansion of the NM Safe Promise, launching a New Mexico Safe Dining application for android and apple. Shop Local includes the push for the NM True Certified online shopping guide to encourage the purchase of local products. Keep New Mexico True is our environmental stewardship campaign that ran the entire summer. NMTD coordinated this effort with other state agencies (State Parks/Game & Fish). Sec. Schroer said, "I was very pleased that we were able to partner with sister agencies to launch this effort. We put our money together and essentially doubled the campaign."

**New Mexico Magazine - Ed Graves:**

Mr. Graves announced the excitement of celebrating our 98th year as the longest tenured state magazine in the country. Though this year has been an interesting one, our mission remains the same that we strive to bring to life the adventures of our state culture and diversity, while presenting the people, places and passion of New Mexicans in a positive light. Mr. Graves brought to light that not only is the magazine being produced, but with the pivots done due to COVID, it is becoming a multimedia operation by developing our websites and applications. The Magazine launched the New

Mexico True Heroes program, where 10 heroes of those who were nominated will be announced on a Facebook Live program on November 12 as NM True Heroes. New Mexico Magazine has also launched a new weekly product entitled "10 things to do this weekend."

**Tourism Development - Suzy Lawrence:**

One of the first initiatives of Secretary Schroer when COVID-19 hit was to organize industry task forces. In partnership with the NM Small Business Development Center (SBDC), NMTD identified nine sectors within travel and tourism to gather real-time data, which was necessary to help NMTD understand the extent of economic injury in order to best serve the industry and help businesses to define their own economic injury to be prepared when applying for grants and assistance. They also developed an online learning center that has quite a bit of free resources. The Clean and Beautiful program received 40 applications for the FY21 grant cycle, and 37 different communities received grants with quite a bit of geographic diversity. Ms. Lawrence also informed the commission that Deborah Abeita Torres, NMTD's Cultural Heritage Coordinator, is available for outreach and technical assistance for tribal tourism. Ms. Lawrence also discussed the upcoming NMTD Small Tourism Business Resiliency Virtual Workshop.

**Commissioner Updates:**

**Commissioner Chris Stagg** – With more people wanting to enjoy the outdoors, there has been an increase of hikers and campers in and around Taos and Taos Ski Valley this summer. Commissioner Stagg gave a shout-out to Commissioner Brooks for diligently working on the Skiing CSP with the Governor's office.

**Commissioner George Brooks** – Through the help of Secretary Schroer, the Ski CSPs have been advanced to the Governor's office for review, and we are awaiting an answer on what will happen for the future of skiing in New Mexico.

**Commissioner Tania Armenta** – In-state marketing resumed in August as well as out-of-state advertising to the areas that are safe. Currently working with ABQ Sunport to help sustain the airline service. The Oldtown ABQ Visitor Information Center is also going to be reopening soon.

**Commissioner Scott Hutton** – With COVID going on, the real estate market in Northern New Mexico is hot as many people are leaving the cities to move to more rural areas. Commissioner Hutton mentioned that HIPICO Santa Fe has been doing a summer series, and they had their first concert of the series, which was a great success.

**Chairwoman Jennifer L. Kimball** – No Report

**Commissioner Emerson Vallo** – American Indian, Alaskan Native Tourism Association virtual conference will be September 14, free of charge. Commissioner Vallo also mentioned the 50k Mt. Taylor run that is on September 26.

**Commissioner Belia Alvarez** – Special thank you again to Secretary Schroer and NMTD for your tireless efforts to juggle the needs of our tourism partners and the superseding need for public safety. Hopefully, the worst effects of this pandemic are moving behind us, and we can begin the long journey forward. The region and Las Cruces welcomed the latest update to the public health order of increasing

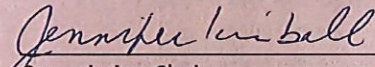
lodging occupancy. Important events such as the successful Annual NM Artisan Market at Hotel Albuquerque that started on Thanksgiving Weekend in 2018, a market in Santa Fe and "Artisans at Balloon Fiesta" were all cancelled. To assist them, we are currently building out space at The Sawmill Market located in Albuquerque right across the street from Hotel Chaco, on the weekends for them to sell their creations. Ten booths will be dedicated/established on the southeast side of the Sawmill Market. The Artisans are excited and will be there beginning the weekend of October 2 through the end of December. Commissioner Alvarez said, "I invite you to come out, support our creative economy and visit with these very talented NM Artisans. They are truly a special community. I hope this will become a nice tourism event as restrictions continue to ease." It is possible that this will continue in the Spring of 2021 as well. Our Sawmill Market Team is open and has done a wonderful job navigating people safely having completed the NM Safe Certified program, which has also added confidence and ease to all our visitors and future artisans as well.

**Adjourn:**

The motion was made by Commissioner Brooks to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Vallo, and passed unanimously. Chairwoman Kimball adjourned the meeting at 4:18 pm.

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Approved by Commission vote at public meeting held on December 17, 2020.

  
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Commission Chair