



**Credit Union
Association**
of NEW MEXICO

News Release

4200 Wolcott Ave NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 1, 2017

CONTACT: Michael Barrio

202.656.5812

michael@leveragepointinc.com

NM Credit Unions & Business Leaders Gather to Discuss the Future of New Mexico Partnership *Cooperation & Community Drive Healthy Economies*

Today, the Credit Union Association of New Mexico brought state credit union and business leaders across industry – including economic development, technology, cooperatives and community advocacy – to discuss NM’s most pressing issues in a collaborative and generative forum at COOP-NM 2017.

COOP-NM 2017, the Credit Union Association of New Mexico’s legislative event, was held at La Posada de Santa Fe, where more than 80 local and national credit union leaders gathered, along with a showing of New Mexico State legislators – an encouraging turnout for a credit union industry legislative event of this type.

The Credit Union Association of New Mexico hosted the event in Santa Fe, welcoming Real Clear Politics, The Washington Post and a number of high-profile New Mexico organizations. Moderators and panelists included Gary Tonjes of Albuquerque Economic Development, Ona Porter of Prosperity Works, Nyika Allen of the New Mexico Technology Council, Mark Lynch of the National Credit Union Foundation, Jason Espinoza of the NM Association of Commerce and Industry, Chris Fitzgerald of Rio Grande Credit Union and many more.

“I’m so appreciative that New Mexico credit unions included economic development and job creation as a topic of conversation at this very important meeting,” Gary Tonjes, President & CEO of Albuquerque Economic Development said. “For New Mexico to really advance, it needs to come from a variety of interests and communities throughout the state. This event gave us the opportunity to do a deep dive on issues that are imperative to moving the state forward.”

“Standing and pulling together in the same direction is the way that New Mexico – or any state, really – can succeed,” said Larry Blanchard, Legislative and Communications Strategist for CUNA Mutual. “That’s the heart and soul of the cooperative and credit union philosophy.”

“The opportunity to come together to create partnerships for financial inclusion, and to create responsible market solutions that truly serve our state is remarkable and deeply appreciated.” Ona Porter, CEO of Prosperity Works said.

Panel topics, which included economic development, poverty, cooperative business models, and community reinvestment, were expanded upon and contextualized for the 2017 political and media landscape during the highly anticipated keynote delivered by Real Clear Politics national political correspondent, Caitlin Huey-Burns and The Washington Post’s Jennifer Rubin.



Credit Union Association of NEW MEXICO

“One of the lessons from this election is getting outside of Washington and New York and focusing on what’s going on in the states and state legislatures,” said Caitlin Huey-Burns. “The cultivation of candidates for office are going to be more critical than ever.”

“We are in uncharted waters with a new President, in a new style of politics,” Jennifer Rubin said. “All of us in the media, and in the business world will need to adjust and reexamine old assumptions.”

COOP-NM 2017 is the result of a collaboration between the Credit Union Association of New Mexico and Leverage Point, Inc., an Albuquerque-based public affairs and lobbying firm. “The concept [for the event] was a collaborative integration of New Mexico’s credit union leaders and issues with the state’s business and legislative concerns in an effort to explore actionable solutions and build strategic partnerships across industry,” said Michael Barrio, Managing Partner and Vice President of Public Affairs for Leverage Point. “We wanted to ensure NM’s credit unions a place at the table when discussing issues that impact the nearly 900 thousand NM credit union members.”

“Cooperatives have played a major role in uniting business and not-for-profit segments in the common goal of solving a variety of public concerns,” Paul Stull, President and CEO of the Credit Union Association of New Mexico. “This event, we hope, has expanded the possibilities and opportunities for NM credit unions and business to unite in this endeavor for a strong and vibrant New Mexico. We truly are stronger together.”

About CUANM: The Credit Union Association of New Mexico is a trade organization that helps credit unions address member needs through services, products, education and advocacy. First established in 1958, CUANM has been helping credit unions help their members for more than 50 years.