2013

Living Culture Corridors Plan: The Rio Arriba Indo-Hispano Homeland

Resource Center for Raza Planning Field School

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The Rio Arriba Indo-Hispano Homeland
A Living Culture Corridors Plan
Indo-Hispano Summer Field School, 2013
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Rio Arriba County boasts a variety of assets, such as historic buildings and architecture, diverse landscapes, unique culture and rich history, and a strategic location in relation to popular New Mexico tourist attractions (e.g., Santa Fe, Taos). In addition, the county faces various challenges associated with a declining and aging population, slow economy, high rates of drug abuse, and inadequate public transportation. The county developed as a result of Land-grants but has become more of a bedroom community. For example, in Truchas, there are many land-grant heirs who still serve on the board that governs the use of the land, but many of the residents in this location travel to find wage-employment elsewhere. The county as a whole has great potential for growth in the agricultural market. The terrain is unique in that certain areas are more appropriate for farming, while others serve as a prime location for ecotourism. The communities tend to have decent median household incomes overall, yet there are many who live in poverty and claim a much lower yearly household income. Educational attainment levels vary throughout the county, but there are many citizens who have not completed high school or any college. Agricultural production in Rio Arriba has shifted towards maintaining larger animals, such as cattle, that are more difficult to sustain than smaller animals such as goats and chickens. Furthermore, agricultural land has seen a change in use as many residents now farm alfalfa rather than chile, apples, and other produce. The county has a lively industry of traditional handmade crafts and arts which would benefit from enhanced marketing and branding.

Strategies and recommendations were developed at the individual community level for the Santa Cruz Basin, the Lower Rio Chama Basin and Española Valley as well as for Rio Arriba County as a whole. Each location was studied and its unique characteristics were taken into account. County-wide recommendations included revitalization of streetscape, social programming, engagement of youth, and implementation of heritage trails. For the Santa Cruz Basin area, strategies highlighted marketing and branding, investment in youth programs and resources, and promoting tourism. Strategies identified for Lower Rio Chama included artisan crafts, establishing an agricultural park, and social programming in public space. Recommendations for Española focused on mixed-use zoning, streetscape development, opportunities for small businesses, public space improvements, and year-round event planning.

Historically, Rio Arriba county has benefited from government grants intended to spur the economy and boost their longevity. Unfortunately, these grants have failed to provide the long-term benefits which they were intended to bring. The county has little opportunities for employment and small-businesses, both factors which contribute to declining population. Many residents are leaving the area in search of opportunities which are not available in Rio Arriba County. This field school report takes into account the assets, challenges, historical background, existing conditions and addresses specific areas in which the local economy may be improved for the long-term. There is an overarching need for investment into public space and the arts industry. Marketing and branding and tourism all need to be developed along with community events which highlight the unique aspects of the area.

I. Executive Summary

The objective of the Indo-Hispano field school was to provide the communities of the Santa Cruz Basin, the Lower Rio Chama Basin and the Española Valley with an economic development plan while providing students with community-based research experience in the field. Over the course of one week students met with leaders, agencies, and organizations within the field school boundaries. This qualitative data collection was then followed by a two week period of quantitative analysis. The findings from this study were presented to several members of the community.

The purpose of the Indo-Hispano Rural Planning and Design Field School (I-HFS) is twofold. First, to provide graduate students in the UNM School of Architecture and Planning with a community-based learning experience by working with traditional Chicano communities of Northern New Mexico. The second intent is to offer technical assistance to communities in Rio Arriba County in the areas of natural resource planning, physical design, and economic development. The primary objective of I-HFS is to partner students with community leaders from land grant and acequia communities in the Rio Arriba County region in an effort to advance the development and implementation of economic development projects by the I-HFS field school.

I-HFS was designed to provide students with a two week joint classroom and field research experience targeting communities such as the Santa Cruz Basin, the Lower Rio Chama Basin as well as the Española Valley. Students worked in small groups in conjunction with community leaders and developed strategies for community-based economic development.

I-Hispano Field School Methodology

During the week of July 8th through July 12th 2013, students conducted qualitative field research in the form of site community observations, interviews with the City of Española and Rio Arriba County staff, as well as conversations with community members. The purpose of the field research was to provide students with a context for understanding the economic conditions in the Rio Arriba County region. The field school was then followed up by two weeks of quantitative data analysis in order to develop the economic assessment and findings for this study based on understanding the cultural context from field experience.
II. Background

Central Northern New Mexico has a unique place in American history, where the living traditions of the region are reflected in the cultural landscape. It is a region of communities whose livelihoods have been tied to the land and watersheds intimately. People organize around the seasons of the watershed; when the monsoons bring replenishing rain, hard winters bring deep snow, and hot summers bring hot chile. Traditional Northern New Mexican heritage has not been recreated from a memory or a textbook like a living history museum or put on as a show for tourists - it never went away. Many people have strong ties to their communities, the land, and practice traditional lifestyles unique to New Mexico along living cultural corridors.

American Territorial Period

In 1850, New Mexico was organized as a territory and adopted its first constitution. The late 1800s brought many changes to the region as homesteaders made their way West to stake land claims under the new American government. In 1868 telegraphic communications connected New Mexico with the rest of the world, followed shortly after with the first railroads. The Chili Line and Cumbres & Toltec railroads were important economic drivers of the region. The rail line connected settlers of the rail town of Española with Santa Fe, carrying mixed freight, chile, and tourists through the Rio Chama Valley until its closure in 1941. American economic development centered on access to timber and resource extraction. Gold was found in the Ortiz Mountains and virgin timber forests were found along the Rio Chama and into Colorado. In the late 1800s and early 1900s the land grant system was federalized and previously communal land tracts were made into forest reserves and national forests, putting pressure on irrigated land for all the agricultural production (Community by Design, 2009). By 1886 the railroad had expanded access to lumber resources in the region. In 1904 the sawmill and company town of El Vado were established, clear-cutting timber until the 1920s when resources were exhausted and the town was shut down.

During World War I, Northern New Mexico had a booming sheep industry supplying lamb and wool for military uniforms to the country (The Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area, 2011). In the early 1920s-1930s dams like El Vado and Conchas were constructed to capture seasonal flows and snow melt to hold in reserve for the growing populations. Oil, Gas, and coal exploration started, and in 1923 oil was discovered on the Navajo reservation. Route 66 opened the West in 1926, along the first American highways. In 1929 the Great Depression hit New Mexico, bringing a harsh winter and a decline in the sheep and timber industries. Water development projects added jobs to the regional economy during this period of high unemployment. El Vado reservoir was built in 1933-1935 to store Rio Chama water in the spring for release to middle Rio Grande farmers later in the season. The Rio Grande compact followed shortly after as an agreement to share water between New Mexico, Texas, and Colorado.

World War II signifies the major shift in economic development in the region. In 1943 and 1945 the Los Alamos National Laboratory and Sandia National Laboratory were established, generating wage labor in the region. This shift in economic structure allowed farmers who were leaving the state for supplemental income to work for a localized employer. By the 1950s petroleum based demand and energy production had started to replace agriculture and ranching as the primary economic drivers of the region (Community by Design, 2009). In addition, uranium was discovered in the area and mined.
III. Existing Conditions

Rio Arriba

Rio Arriba County’s population pyramid reflects the reality of a declining population due to migration. Between 2000 and 2010 the county lost almost a thousand residents. More recently, between 2011 and 2012, Rio Arriba lost an estimated 35 residents due primarily to a net out migration of 274 people (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). The common explanation among residents of the area is that there is not enough opportunity for the labor force. The population pyramid illustrates a decline in overall population share between 50 and 20 years of age. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics, there was a difference between the state’s and Rio Arriba County’s average annual unemployment rate from 2008 through 2012. The state’s average annual unemployment rate was 6.7% and Rio Arriba County’s average was 7.4% over the same 2008, 2012 time period. The difference in unemployment indicates that there is a lack of employment opportunities in Rio Arriba. For those who are employed, 25% work in the educational services, health care, and social assistance industry, and 40% of all workers in the county are employed by the government (U.S. Census, 2011). This shows that the primary employer for the area is the federal and local government. These findings may indicate limited employment opportunities outside of these entities, and these government funded opportunities are likely to diminish with expected and continuing budget cuts by the local, state, and federal government.

Poverty indicators are based on income levels rather than on quality of life measures; thus, poverty data provide limited information. For instance, a fifth of all Rio Arriba County residents are considered to be in poverty; however, many residents are property owners and may supplement their income and lifestyle utilizing their agricultural and artisan skills, which enhances their overall quality of life. Furthermore, the median household income in the county was $40,366 (U.S. Census (b), 2011). In terms of educational attainment, 22% of adults 25 and older have less than a high school education, and 15% hold a bachelor’s degree or higher (U.S. Census (b), 2011). Although Rio Arriba does face challenges, the subsequent sections describe the different areas of the region and highlight the many assets within it.
Santa Cruz Basin

The Santa Cruz corridor is located in the southeastern corner of Rio Arriba County, on the border of Santa Fe County. The primary settlements in this area are Chimayo, Cordova, and Truchas. These settlements are situated on or near Highway 76, the High Road to Taos. The Santa Cruz corridor is characterized by the extent to which it has retained its historic form: all three communities noted have a plaza with a historic church. This historic form could be capitalized on as a draw to the area. The specific characteristics of each settlement will be discussed below.

Chimayo

Chimayo is located approximately 8.5 miles east of the city of Española. In 2010, the total population of Chimayo was 3,177, with a median age of 41.2 (U.S. Census, 2010). In 2000, 100% of Chimayo’s residents identified as Hispanic or Latino on the US Census, however, by 2010, that percentage had dropped to 89.4%. As of 2010, 84% of occupied housing units were owner-occupied (U.S. Census, 2010). In 2000, 77.1% of Chimayo residents reported to speak a language other than English at home. The median household income was $31,474, 32.3% of residents 25 years of age or older had graduated high school, and only 11.8% had a Bachelor’s degree or higher, comparatively low to Rio Arriba county overall (New Mexico Economic Development Department, 2010).

Chimayo is home to El Santuario de Chimayo, a Catholic shrine which houses holy dirt that is believed to have healing powers. Since its establishment, the Santuario has been the destination of pilgrimages from all over the region, particularly around Easter time. In 2013, an estimated 200,000 people traveled to the Santuario, with one quarter of those visits happening during holy week (Contreras, 2013). With this major and consistent influx of people, there is a huge potential market for cultural goods.

The settlements located along the Santa Cruz cultural corridor have retained their historic form more so than other communities in Rio Arriba county. Plaza del Cerro, established in the 1700s as a defensive center for Chimayo, is today one of the best examples of historic Spanish plazas. Though underutilized, if preserved and revitalized, this could once again be a successful public space (Center for Sustainable Destinations, n.d.). Chimayo has a strong historic connection to traditional crafts and culinary techniques. There is a strong fiber arts industry, primarily represented by traditional weavers; some of the weaver families also raise their own sheep and practice hand-spinning and dyeing techniques (Chimayo Association of Businesses, 2010). Chimayo is also well known for its chile. Usually sold in powdered red form, Chimayo chile is sought after from people all over the region (Madison, 2007).

Cordova

Nearly 14 miles from Española, Cordova sits just off the High Road to Taos. In 2010, the total population for Cordova was 414, with a median age of 46.1 years. All residents identify as Hispanic or Latino. Sixteen percent of the 200 housing units were unoccupied at the time of the census data collection, and of the occupied units, 86% were owner-occupied. The median household income is $20,083, which is only 48% of the median household income for Rio Arriba county. Only 24.5% of Cordova residents 25 years of age and older are high school graduates (U.S. Census, 2010).

Cordova does not have the same connection to traditional weaving that is seen in Chimayo, but the village does have a historic connection to art of the santero. The Cordova School of Woodworking, established by legendary santero Jose Dolores Lopez to teach the art of carving santos, was active in the late 1800s/early 1900s (Taos Unlimited, n.d.), and by 1980 there were more than 30 santeros living in the town (Farrell, 1983). Cordova still retains its historic plaza-centered form today; however, the town is experiencing high vacancy rates of its homes and is not the lively artisan community it once was.

Truchas

Truchas is 17.6 miles from Española, and at 8,051 feet in elevation, is the highest settlement in New Mexico. In 2010, the total population was 560, with a median age of 48.3 years. All 560 residents of Truchas were reported as being Hispanic or Latino. As of the Census data collection time, there were 340 total housing units, 35% of which were unoccupied, by far the highest vacancy rate in the Santa Cruz Cultural Corridor (U.S. Census, 2010).

During the mid 20th century, Truchas had a thriving timber industry, but as the timber resources were exploited, this industry went into decline and has never fully recovered (Kosek, 2006). Like Chimayo, Truchas also has a significant fiber arts industry, with traditional textile weaving still being practiced in shops like The Cordova’s Handweaving Workshop. However, there are threats to the cultural traditions of Truchas: not only does the younger generation tend to move away and break the family tradition of weaving, but a number of outsiders have also set up artist studios in the town, and some of the local artists have taken a service- and maintenance-oriented role rather than a creative role in the artistic process (personal communication, Harry Cordova, 8 July 2013). Truchas also has a cinematic claim to fame: the movie, The Milagro Beanfield War, was filmed in Truchas in 1988 (New Mexico Tourism Department, n.d.). The historic form of Truchas could still be capitalized on for film production today.

Chimayo Study Area

Cordova Study Area

Truchas Study Area
The Lower Rio Chama
Lower Rio Chama is situated in the Southeast corner of the county just south of Tierra Amarilla. The Census subdivided Lower Rio Chama into a Census County Division (CCD). Inside of this Census county subdivision are two villages or Census Designated Places (CDP), El Rito, and Abiquiu. The closest cities are Española and Santa Fe. There are two national forests (Carson National Forest, and Santa Fe National forest), and Bureau of Land Management land throughout the Rio Chama Valley, as well as privately held land.

The estimated population of Rio Chama as of 2011 is 3,426 people, with a median age of 45.1 (U.S. Census (c), 2011). Rio Chama’s age distribution is very uneven. A population pyramid reveals that the majority of the population is clumped in the 15-29 year old age category and the 45-65 category, with slight bulges at 5-9 years old and for women 85 years and over (U.S. Census (c), 2011). In the coming years if there is little change to the current population, there will soon be a large aging population in Rio Chama as well as a decent sized middle-aged population.

Rio Chama’s rich colonial history is still strongly represented in today’s demographics. The population identifies as 74% Hispanic or Latino alone, with 21% White alone. The remaining 5% of the population can be attributed to another race or mix of races and a small American Indian and Alaska Native population (U.S. Census (c), 2011).

Although there are approximately 1,445 total workers age 16 and over in Rio Chama (U.S. Census (c), 2011), only around 18 people live and work there (U.S. Census On The Map, 2011). There are 292 people that come from outside Lower Rio Chama to work, and 839 people live in Rio Chama but work outside the area (On The Map, 2011). About 64.1% of people living in Rio Chama work within Rio Arriba County and the rest commute even further. The average travel time to work for Rio Chama residents is 28.8 minutes and 91.7% of area residents drive a car, truck or van to work; 73.6% drive alone (U.S. Census (c), 2011).

Lower Rio Chama has struggled with unemployment like most of the country with a 12% unemployment rate according to the American Community Survey (ACS) 2007-2011 five year estimates. El Rito CDP has a much lower unemployment rate at 5%, and the sample size was too small for the ACS to estimate the unemployment rate for Abiquiu CDP in the Rio Chama Valley, almost a third (31%) of the employed population worked in the educational services, health care and social assistance industry, indicating that many of these workers work in the public sector; in terms of class of workers, 33% of the employed are government workers (U.S. Census (c), 2011).

The mean household income in Lower Rio Chama was $58,409, in Abiquiu CDP $22,044 and $44,022 in El Rito. The reason for these large variations in median household income could be because the areas outside of these small villages cater to affluent homeowners. The per capita income in Lower Rio Chama was much smaller at only $22,333. The poverty rate for Lower Rio Chama (14% for all people) as a whole was much smaller than the village of Abiquiu (40% for all people). About 20% of people 25 and older in Lower Rio Chama have less than a high school education. Another 25% hold a high school degree or equivalent, and almost 30% have a Bachelor’s degree or more (U.S. Census (c), 2011).

Overall, Lower Rio Chama has an average median household income, a range of people with different educational attainment making a diversified workforce, and a poverty rate of 14%. However, there appear to be pockets where poverty is significantly higher, educational attainment is lower, and household incomes are lower. For instance in Abiquiu CDP, only 39% of people have a high school diploma or higher, and in Lower Rio Chama as a whole, 80% have a high school diploma or higher.

Lower Rio Chama is home to a historic educational institution, recreation, wilderness, famous artists and iconic natural beauty.
Española

The current population of Española is 10,240, which is far greater than the other communities profiled in this report (U.S. Census, 2011). The median household income for Española was $37,614, which is higher than most communities in this region, but still below the state’s median household income of $44,651 (U.S. Census, 2011). Persons living below poverty level in Española was 24% in 2011 (U.S. Census, 2011). Española has seen an increase in out migration of their youth labor force due to a lack of employment opportunities. Although the vacant housing rate is 12.8%, which is an indication that there is sufficient housing stock, currently 46.1% of all renters are spending 35% or more of their household income on rent. A lack of affordable housing options may be another contributing factor to the out migration trend (U.S. Census, 2011).

Española is a primary destination for goods and services for the surrounding rural communities. Its size and centralized location off of U.S. Route 285, between Taos and Santa Fe, allows it to serve as an employment and service center for Lower Rio Chama and Santa Cruz Basin residents. Very few Española residents live and work within the city limits. In fact, the majority of those employed in the city live elsewhere. In 2011, Española’s labor market consisted of 5,955 employed workers. However, only 11.8% of the employed workers lived and worked within the city limits, and the remaining 88.2% of workers commuted into Española, but lived outside the city limits. (U.S. Census. On The Map, 2011).

According to the 2010 retail market profile, which determines the economic leakage of a city by analyzing total credit card purchases made in an area, Española’s supply of goods and services exceed the local city demands in nearly every industry (“ESRI Business Analyst,” 2010). The surplus of goods and services are likely driven by consumer demands from the surrounding rural communities, regional commuters and tourists. Examples of industries with a large surplus factor include grocery stores, gasoline stations and limited-service eating places (e.g. fast food restaurants) (“ESRI Business Analyst,” 2010). These three industries serve the local population but also, cater heavily to outsiders. Industries that are not meeting the local demand, or where there is economic leakage, include lawn and garden equipment supply stores, special food services, furniture stores and jewelry stores. (“ESRI Business Analyst,” 2010). This leakage may indicate that there is a retail opportunity to expand these industries, or it may be that other cities such as Santa Fe or Taos are filling this demand for the region. The retail market profile confirms that Española is a local hub for goods and services; however, the report does not provide insight on the city’s tourism sector.

Despite having a historical downtown and plaza in close proximity to the main highway, there is limited signage to attract tourists to stop and visit the city. Furthermore, both spaces are underutilized and do not evoke a clear identity or incorporate local assets. Tourists that do stop in Española typically are drawn to the casinos. However, these attractions are located on reservation land and do not contribute to the city’s tax base. Aside from filling up on gas, eating a quick snack or testing their luck at a slot machine tourists typically spend very little time and money in Española.

Nevertheless, Española has the potential to highlight and inform travelers of its rich and diverse identity that encompasses three cultures, Indo-Hispano, Tewa and Anglo (City of Española, 2013). Although the presence of the railroad transformed Española from an agrarian based society to an industrial society, the cultural importance and appreciation of La Tierra continues to exist within the city. Española maintains strong cultural ties to the rural communities that promote and preserve rural traditions. Its commitment to tradition and honoring the past is clearly highlighted by the annual festival, Las Fiestas del Valle Española, as well as newer events that focus on agricultural production, such as the Garlic Harvest Festival. However, more efforts to enhance economic opportunities tied to cultural activities, social programming, and physical design need to be prioritized if Española hopes to become a destination rather than a pass through city.
Vision - Rio Arriba County is full of distinctive character, with a tremendous amount of variation across its many regions. We seek to highlight this character and distinction by integrating heritage tourism and asset-based economic development, as well as unifying County destinations through corridor visibility. Through these strategies, we see the regions of Rio Arriba County as Living Culture Corridors that celebrate the living traditions of Northern New Mexicans.

Regional Strategies & Recommendations

Regional Recommendations:

- Invest in social programming along Living Culture Corridors to promote year-round interest in Rio Arriba destinations and festivals
- Utilize integrated Heritage trails that celebrate distinctive and varied Northern New Mexican cultural traditions and destinations
- Revitalize streetscape and historic forms
- Engage youth in opportunities that anchor them in the traditions, innovation and workforce in the community

Regional Strategies

Living Culture Corridors Development

“Corridors are the skeletal structure of the regional form and its connections. And they form the defining framework of its future.” (Calthorpe & Fulton, 2001)

The first strategy we explored for regional economic development is the creation of Living Culture Corridors. The communities that line the Rio Chama and Rio Grande river corridors create a cultural belt of interesting places. Much of New Mexico’s early history happened in this area depicted in maps as Rio Arriba. Moreover, the historical forms and traditional infrastructure are still present; acequia systems and other community land and mutual systems are still practiced between the rural communities in the area. The Living Culture Corridors could include the highway loop that includes Highway 64, 84 and 285. The highway between Taos and Santa Fe is used as a thoroughfare, where the cultural wealth of the Rio Arriba region is often overlooked. Highway 84 and 285 are two key corridor segments that have been identified in our study area for development in lower Rio Arriba County. The boundaries of the corridor area include sub-corridor areas leading to communities like El Rito and Chimayo.

As a branding strategy for corridor identity, Living Culture Corridors seek to create an easily identifiable presence that represents Rio Arriba’s distinctive regional character. Living Culture Corridor development references the cultural landscape of Rio Arriba and Northern New Mexico, and seeks to create networks that are connected to vibrant places that serve the people of the region and visitors. “Living Culture Corridors” is an approach that seeks to integrate the various tours and trails into a comprehensive route to Rio Arriba’s cultural assets, while promoting corridor visibility and the revitalization of historic plazas and streetscapes. Marketing deliverables could include accessible and comprehensive maps, guidebooks, street painting or wayfinding projects and smartphone apps.
Heritage Tourism

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places, artifacts and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past” (National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2013). As a strategy for Rio Arriba County, Heritage Tourism seeks to attract visitors from around the world and appeal to locals looking for a day trip or cultural experience to the region’s historical, cultural and natural resources. Heritage Tourism in Rio Arriba can include:

- Geotourism- Geotourism is defined as “tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents” (Center for Sustainable Destinations, 2010, p.1).
- Faith tourism- Faith tourism or religious tourism is tourism that attracts travelers interested in pilgrimage or spiritual retreat.
- Agritourism and Agritourismo- Agritourism can take multiple forms and includes agricultural based destinations such as agriculture parks, seed banks, markets, pick-your own fruit operations, viticulture and brewery tours, working farm tours, foodie excursions and farm-stays.
- Ecotourism and Sustainable-tourism- Ecotourism is defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people” (The International Ecotourism Society, 1990). Sustainable tourism seeks to have a low ecological impact on communities.

Workforce and Entrepreneurial Development

The precedents reviewed in this plan and the current state of the workforce in Rio Arriba county lead us to several recommendations. First there are many in the labor force pool who may need remedial courses because a significant portion of the population hold less than a high school education. Although we feel there is a need to invest into building the human capital of the workforce we are prescribing a education strategy that will build off of local knowledge and traditions. Some of these kinds of courses already exist at Northern New Mexico College. These courses can train individuals in the traditional crafts and farming traditions of northern New Mexico, as well as in the innovative ecological management practices being developed in the area. The kinds of educational experiences are diverse and appeal to a wider student type than just traditional four year academia, such as professionals or retirees looking to develop new skills.

Another recommendation would be to offer more entrepreneurial training so that individuals can take these craft skills and turn them into businesses. Handmade in America, a precedent featured on page 11, offers courses to participants and others in how to create sustainable businesses. However, a major component of what makes Handmade in America successful is that they have connected their crafts and culture into a tourism industry that is flourishing. This provides a constant stream of new customers to the individual entrepreneurs.

Regional Recommendations
Precedents

Handmade in America

Handmade in America is an organization that was started by a handful of North Carolina residents in 1993 (Handmade in America, 2013). They came together to create a new approach to economic development for their region in Western North Carolina. They began their process by evaluating the region’s assets. “They knew that the region was filled with assets: it boasts some of the oldest, grandest mountains in the world, it is a biodiversity hot spot, and it serves as a home to some of the most creative craft artists in the nation” (Handmade in America, 2013). Similar to Northern New Mexico, Western North Carolina is home to beautiful mountain ranges and many craft artists. After securing a three year organizational grant from the Pew Partnership for Civic Change, craft artists in the region organized to establish “Western North Carolina as the center of the handmade object in the United States” (Handmade in America, 2013).

The organization now connects suppliers of resources used in craft production and entrepreneurial artists within the region. They also engage with other small businesses, associations, educators, regional institutions, and corporations for the purpose of “maintaining and enhancing the region’s quality of life while broadening its economic opportunities” (Anderson, n.d.). As a matter of practice Handmade has developed a set of guiding principles that help achieve its goal of sustainable economic development.

This first principle is to include anyone who is willing to participate. They reach out to the entire community of Western North Carolina to participate in the planning processes and projects. “Currently over 600 citizens are participating in 11 regional and local Handmade projects. Our quarterly newsletter, Partners: Explorations in Community, is mailed to 2,500 people who have expressed an interest in Handmade in America” (Anderson, n.d.). The second principle is to take on projects in partnerships. Through these partnerships they have been able to establish easily accessible credit for artisans, and organize craft heritage trails. These principles and others have led to tremendous success.

The total annual economic impact of this initiative is impressive and has increased from $122 million in 1995 to $260.5 million in 2007 (Stoddard, Davé, Evans & DESS Business Research, 2008). The 130 craft galleries of the region generate an average gross sales of $500,000 per year; employ 3.5 full time employees, and 62% of sales are to tourists/visitors (Stoddard, Davé, Evans & DESS Business Research, 2008). The galleries are just one of the total income generators of the Handmade initiative. Other income generators are the tourism industry, educational services, and suppliers.

The Craft Clusters initiative brings together the production, supply, service providers, retail industries and institutions to develop, promote and market traditional products along craft heritage trails. Handmade in America’s Craft Cluster initiative localizes all elements of the supply chain. This approach is part of a multifaceted phased development process that invests in each craft medium’s industry; for example the WNC Fibershed Initiative brought together area fiber farmers, artists, mills, processors, educators and retailers. A craft cluster involves phased development, so that multiple economic development strategies are in play at one time. In 2013, Handmade in America will add a wood cluster to the fiber cluster, followed by other future clusters.

Their integrated economic development initiatives such as peer-to-peer mentorship, community development, social programming, and technical assistance for collaborative partnerships, training and marketing create an environment to support citizen-driven local professional development. The Handmade in America initiative is an example of how the northern New Mexico region (similar to Western North Carolina) can organize to increase the economic impact of tourism, artisan crafts, and rich history and culture for individual and collaborative entrepreneurs.

Green Works Development

Green Works Development (GWD) program began in the 2010 summer as a youth training and community development initiative in Oakland, California (Green Works Development program [GWD], n.d.). The initiative trained 12 local youth in green building techniques, green landscaping, horticulture, environmental planning and sustainable building techniques. Additionally, the GWD program gave the youth safety and general job skills, and paid them minimum wage over 150 hours (GWD program, n.d.). The project delivered pedestrian friendly walkways, a plaza behind a local church, and a mosaic-tiled fountain to a community in Oakland, California. The GWD program works in collaboration with Merritt College Environmental Management Program, which offers degrees and certificates. Many of the GWD youth have gone on to higher education and continue to work in the community. This program can be an example of how Northern New Mexico College can engage youth and adults into a program that provides employment and skill while engaging the youth in their communities.

Ely, Nevada

The rural town of Ely, Nevada is situated on Highway 50, The Loneliest Road in America. In the early to mid-1900s, Ely profited from the nearby copper deposits, but by the 1970s the value of copper plummeted leaving Ely to face grave economic challenges (Rane, 2013). Over the last few decades, Ely has strategically branded itself as a weekend destination for visitors traveling from Reno or Las Vegas, Nevada. Similar to Española, Ely has a casino in town and has an affinity for specialized cars (race cars). Their race car festival, bathtub boat lake race and the restoration of the Pony Express Steam Engine attracts visitors with a keen interest in vehicles (Pine Country Tourism, n.d.).

Improving the aesthetics of the downtown has been community driven and spearheaded by organizations such as, the Ely Renaissance Society (ERS). The first project by ERS was to incorporate local history through murals in the downtown (Ely Renaissance Society [ERS], 2004). Many local businesses were financially involved with this project. The second project included purchasing a historical property to create the Ely Renaissance Village, which today hosts historical presentations, farmers’ markets and art/wine walks, which highlight local artists in the region (ERS, 2004). Many actors contributed to rebuilding Ely’s economy, but it was the town ingenuity to create a unique place, with limited resources that ultimately, enabled Ely to create its own identity and peak the tourists’ interest.

nevada-landmarks.com
V. Place-Based Recommendations

Part of the approach for this economic development plan for the Rio Arriba region was to give specific recommendations for towns and places that have opportunities to build on local community assets. For the communities of the Santa Cruz Basin, the strategies and goals are oriented around branding these communities in an authentic manner, based on their unique historical cultural practices. The next step in this strategy is to market these branded historical and cultural assets to tourists. Another goal set for the Santa Cruz Basin is to invest in the youth of the area, to encourage their inclusion into the community, and, develop their skills and capacities.

Lower Rio Chama recommendations are designed to utilize the area’s agricultural, natural, and educational assets. There is a long agricultural tradition in the Lower Rio Chama that in recent years has shifted into a cattle raising industry. This, among other causes, has led to a decline in the production of fruits, vegetables, and small animals. (Rivera, Gonzales & Thompson, 2013) However, we recommend that the Lower Rio Chama community preserve their traditional agricultural practices, and focus on distributing their products locally. The next goal for Lower Rio Chama is to leverage the Northern New Mexico El Rito campus, the areas surrounding natural and community assets to make it another tourist destination for the region.

Recommendations for Española aspire to create a greater sense of place by activating Main Street and the Plaza de Española by proposing physical design strategies and increasing community event programing. People travel to Española to work and purchase goods, but rarely do they come visit the city for pleasure. The casinos attract people, but the revenue generated does not benefit the city. In order to bring activity and generate excitement in Española we recommend that the historic main street be revitalized with thoughtful design strategies that encourage walkability and small business development. Accompanying the new designs, we propose that social programing increase around the Plaza de Española, which currently is very underutilized. Infill development around the plaza will create a more enclosed and welcoming space. Increasing connectivity between the main street and the plaza will increase the opportunity for various events. Finally, way finding strategies that clearly illustrate to outsiders that they have arrived to a unique space will be critical if Española hopes to bring people into the historical core of the city.
Santa Cruz Basin Recommendations

The branding and marketing of Santa Cruz Basin will be critical components of drawing tourists to the Santa Cruz Cultural Corridor. Chimayo is a relatively well-known place to most New Mexico residents; Truchas and Cordova, however, do not share the same notoriety that is characteristic of Chimayo. It is important that these locations make a concerted effort to create or expand on an advertising plan which will allow residents of New Mexico and surrounding states the opportunity to discover and appreciate their unique qualities, terrain, and history. Part of the marketing plan should include creating websites for the various and unique shops where these areas offer. Chimayo, Cordova, and Truchas were, and still are, active in traditional fiber arts and culinary practices. Creating a space for these shops online where one could learn of these practices and view the variety of inventory the shops carry would create easier accessibility to potential visitors.

In addition to retaining the traditional practices, all these communities have retained their historic form and offer a chance for travelers to experience the past. However, this historical connection is not an economic driver for the area but could be if it were marketed to tourists. Other ideas to help with branding and promotion of tourism are a living history tour which highlights the ‘breadbasket of Northern NM’ in Truchas. For Cordova, the Santero connection would serve the same purpose. The Santuario in Chimayo is a good model for drawing tourism and money to the area. Redeveloping the plazas in all three locations would go hand-in-hand with branding and advertising, which can serve to bring in New Mexican and other regional tourists.

The type of tourists that typically visits sites like the Santuario de Chimayo are geotravelers. According to the Global Center for Cultural Entrepreneurship (GCCE), geotravelers are travelers who prefer, “tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents”. A study by the GCCE found that 65% of geotravelers actively seek out sites that display the historical character of a place, 58% find ways to learn about local crafts during trips, and 37% prefer to stay in lodging that reflects the cultural heritage of a site and would pay more to do so (Global Center for Cultural Entrepreneurship, 2012). Capturing the geotravelers segment of the tourism market should be the point of emphasis for positioning in this marketing strategy.

Truchas was once known as the “Breadbasket of Northern New Mexico”, and still has strong ties to its agricultural past. Therefore, Truchas would be an optimal location for “agritourism”. Farmhouse bed and breakfast establishments, where tourists not only stay on a farm but get to participate in farm activities and eat food from the farm, would be a good to not only draw tourists to the area but also provide an opportunity for local farmers to bring in additional revenue. Cordova used to be the New Mexico capital for the Santero tradition, but this has declined and is not an active community anymore. This legacy should be highlighted, with signage that denotes important locations like the former Cordova School of Woodworking and other significant pieces of Santero history. Chimayo could do well focusing continuing service development around the Santuario so that it can potentially be labeled a World Heritage Site in the future. Such a designation would boost the potential for increased tourism.

Many children and young people do not have access to transportation to and from extracurricular activities, after-school and summer programs. This results in youth being unable learn trades or discover hobbies which might then help them to establish a bond with their community. If Cordova, Chimayo and Truchas wish to capitalize on their historical and cultural qualities, it is important for them to maintain them in order to continue offering such traditions in the future, for a long-term period.

Youth programs have shown to be very beneficial investments to communities. Powlick provides a case study of low-income youth in New York State and the benefits which out-of-school time (OST) programs and the overall health of the community and finds that, “OST programs provide community-level benefits such as reductions in juvenile crime and foster economic development by creating linkages between the state, the market, the community, and the family” (Powlick, 2011). Rio Arriba County and the specific areas of Chimayo, Cordova and Truchas would greatly benefit by investment in the enhancement the overall education of youth in this area.

Santa Cruz Basin Recommendations:
- Market and brand unique assets to tourists
- Promote as a Agritourism, Geotourism, and Faith tourist destination
- Investment in youth programs and resources
The Lower Rio Chama

Lower Rio Chama is an ideal location for an Agricultural Business Incubator because of its long history of agricultural production. The Taos Community Economic Development Corp is a great example for entrepreneurial development and growth of small businesses based on agricultural products. The local products and agricultural processing model would utilize the strengths of the Rio Chama Valley and could incorporate seed libraries or other heritage preservation programming. Another strategy to preserve the agricultural traditions would be to establish an Agricultural Park.

Establishing an Agricultural Park (Ag park) would help with historic preservation, the upkeep of traditional infrastructure, and creating habitat conservation opportunities in vulnerable areas. An Ag park combines agricultural production with a park. Ag parks come in many forms and integrate multiple functions on site such as food production, recreation, education and wildlife conservation. They also often provide environmental services such as water treatment or sustainable energy production.

There are several strategies that are capable of preserving cultural traditions and generating income and craft clusters is one. Implementing Craft Clusters in the Lower Rio Chama will use cultural knowledge to bring together elements of the supply chain. The supply chain encompasses the production of raw material, processing, and distribution to retail industries to develop and market traditional products locally. Regional craft clusters could include sheep/fiber, local foods, micro brew/wine, wood, etc. This cluster would reflect traditional handcrafts but could extend to include business opportunities for innovation such as the athletic wool industry like Smartwool in Steamboat springs or other modern processing.

Another method of utilizing assets would be using the El Rito plaza and street front, as well as the Abiquiu plaza and library as third places where the public can seek social programming like entertainment, food/markets, and community. Moreover, promoting educational tourism would work well because the area already has a number of resources offering conferences, seminars, workshops and other educational experiences such as the Ghost Ranch and the El Rito campus of Northern New Mexico College. Promoting El Rito and Abiquiu as destinations to learn skills that are traditional and innovative to travelers and New Mexican locals looking for alternative kinds of educational opportunities would also work well.

The Lower Rio Chama could also promote alternative accommodation experiences such as Farm-stays/Agritourismo, Bed and Breakfasts, camping, RV parks, tee-pees, dormitory style stays at the El Rito campus of Northern New Mexico College and local Inns to travelers seeking overnight stays. Promoting the area as region for self-discovery and organizing around the many local and regional assets such as the Ghost Ranch retreat center, Ojo Caliente, historic churches and ceremonial events, hot springs, wilderness and national forests is yet another method to attract tourists. Finally, organizing youth stewardship opportunities around the watershed and environmental remediation that offers paid, skill-based opportunities tied to educational and community institutions will engage youth in opportunities that anchor them in the traditions, innovation and workforce in the community.

Lower Rio Chama Recommendations:

- Utilization of agricultural resources by establishing an agricultural park
- Develop Agritourism destinations and marketing
- Promoting education and practice of artisan crafts
- Social programming in public spaces
- Alternative accommodations for tourists
- Skill based opportunities for youth
Española needs to increase its visibility and branding to outsiders. Way finding is one strategy that can promote and attract people to the city. Another key component is to revitalize the historic main street corridor in order to enhance the physical and economic development of Española. First, an increased street-front development that incorporates mixed-use zoning will help to capitalize on multiple business opportunities that are needed in order to promote economic development. Restaurants, bars, small boutique-style shops, small grocery and corner stores, theaters, gift shops and financial institutions are a few examples. Next, increasing opportunities for small, local businesses to occupy the revitalized main street will contribute to creating a unique identity for the city. Offering smaller storefronts will help to create more jobs per acre than typical big box developments. Furthermore, enhancing the street condition by widening and improving public spaces such as plazas and sidewalks will allow for greater event programming to exist. Farmers’ markets, car shows and outdoor festivals within the street are examples of public events that will engage the community. Finally, capitalizing on the prevalent car culture of Española while continuing to enhance the idea of living culture corridors is key.

Increasing density of development around plaza area will accomplish three goals: create a safe and comfortable public space by incorporating more uses within the plaza, frame the space with buildings and incorporate civic and commercial uses in those spaces, and increase event programming within the plaza to make the space viable year-round.

Furthering event and social programming to capitalize on the new main-street corridor and plaza development can aid in creating events that can occur year-round. Also, increasing diversity of events to include markets, festivals, celebrations and public gatherings such as farmers markets, car shows, growers festivals, art markets and wine/beer festivals will attract more people to the area. Creating a public calendar of events that is easily accessible to residents and visitors online will allow for a comprehensive way to plan trips to Española.
Española Recommendations:

- Streetscape development with a focus on mixed-use zoning
- Opportunities for small businesses
- Public space improvements
- Year-round event and social programming
- Way finding Signage

Study Area Existing Conditions
Paseo de Oñate - Existing Conditions

Conceptual Vision for Paseo de Oñate
## Regional Economic Development Strategy
### Rio Arriba County
### Living Culture Corridors Plan
### Indo-Hispano Homeland

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### Appendix I - Española Marketplace Profile

#### Summary Demographics
- **2010 Population:** 9,496
- **2010 Households:** 3,747
- **2010 Median Disposable Income:** $33,682
- **2010 Per Capita Income:** $19,239

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry Summary</th>
<th>NAICS</th>
<th>Demand</th>
<th>Supply</th>
<th>Retail Gap</th>
<th>Leakage/</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Number of Businesses</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Retail Trade and Food Drink</strong></td>
<td>444-</td>
<td>$7,122,932</td>
<td>$260,588,185</td>
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<td><strong>Total Motor Vehicle</strong></td>
<td>444-</td>
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<td><strong>Total Food Drink</strong></td>
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<td>$52,601,979</td>
<td>-$42,628,072</td>
<td>-80.6</td>
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</table>

#### Industry Group (Retail, Potential)

- **Motor Vehicle & Parts Dealers**
  - 4441: $14,718,027
  - 4442: $9,157,373
- **Automotive Dealers**
  - 4441: $15,407,277
  - 4442: $11,027,277
- **Other Motor Vehicle Dealers**
  - 4441: $13,422,677
  - 4442: $9,157,373
- **Auto Parts, Accessories & Tire Stores**
  - 4441: $16,342,707
  - 4442: $9,157,373
- **Furniture & Home Furnishings Stores**
  - 4441: $17,353,666
  - 4442: $9,157,373
- **Furniture Stores**
  - 4441: $8,666,466
  - 4442: $8,666,466
- **Home Furnishings Stores**
  - 4441: $8,666,466
  - 4442: $8,666,466
- **Electronics & Appliance Stores**
  - 4441: $1,478,296
  - 4442: $1,478,296
- **Bigg Materials, Garden Equip. & Supply**
  - 4441: $2,080,908
  - 4442: $2,080,908
- **Bigg Material & Supplies Dealers**
  - 4441: $2,352,525
  - 4442: $2,352,525
- **Lawn & Garden Equip. & Supply Stores**
  - 4441: $3,474,375
  - 4442: $3,474,375
- **Food & Beverage Stores**
  - 4441: $5,651,204
  - 4442: $5,651,204
- **Grocery Stores**
  - 4441: $5,177,831
  - 4442: $5,177,831
- **Specialty Food Stores**
  - 4441: $121,960
  - 4442: $121,960
- **Beer, Wine & Liquor Stores**
  - 4441: $21,413
  - 4442: $21,413
- **Health & Personal Care Stores**
  - 4441: $967,673
  - 4442: $967,673
- **Gasoline Stations**
  - 4441: $14,940,616
  - 4442: $14,940,616
- **Clothing & Accessories Stores**
  - 4441: $70,760
  - 4442: $70,760
- **Shoe Stores**
  - 4441: $72,262
  - 4442: $72,262
- **Jewelry, Luggage & Leather Goods Stores**
  - 4441: $174,442
  - 4442: $174,442
- **Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music**
  - 4441: $889,333
  - 4442: $889,333
- **Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical Instrument**
  - 4441: $11,166,82
  - 4442: $11,166,82
- **Book, Periodical & Music Stores**
  - 4441: $737,067
  - 4442: $737,067
- **General Merchandise Stores**
  - 4441: $18,259,569
  - 4442: $18,259,569
- **Department Stores Excluding Leased**
  - 4441: $10,644,470
  - 4442: $10,644,470
- **Other General Merchandise Stores**
  - 4441: $3,473,227
  - 4442: $3,473,227
- **Miscellaneous Store Retailers**
  - 4441: $1,063,929
  - 4442: $1,063,929
- **Florists**
  - 4441: $44,999
  - 4442: $44,999
- **Office Supplies, Stationary & Gift Stores**
  - 4441: $184,188
  - 4442: $184,188
- **Used Merchandise Stores**
  - 4441: $51,189
  - 4442: $51,189
- **Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers**
  - 4441: $297,536
  - 4442: $297,536
- **Nonstore Retailers**
  - 4441: $866,774
  - 4442: $866,774
- **Electronic Shopping & Mail-Order Houses**
  - 4441: $13,263
  - 4442: $13,263
- **Vending Machine Operators**
  - 4441: $298,520
  - 4442: $298,520
- **Direct Selling Establishments**
  - 4441: $574,606
  - 4442: $574,606
- **Food Services & Drinking Places**
  - 722: $9,975,907
  - 722: $9,975,907
- **Full-Service Restaurants**
  - 722: $3,449,499
  - 722: $3,449,499
- **Limited-Serve Eating Places**
  - 722: $3,874,940
  - 722: $3,874,940
- **Special Food Services**
  - 722: $335,472
  - 722: $335,472
- **Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages**
  - 723: $866,774
  - 723: $866,774

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### Leakage/Surplus Factor by Industry Subsector

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subsector</th>
<th>Leakage/Surplus Factor</th>
<th>Number of Establishments</th>
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<td>Motor Vehicle &amp; Parts Dealers</td>
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<td>Drinking Places - Alcoholic Beverages</td>
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**Note:** The Leakage/Surplus Factor represents a snapshot of retail potential and sales, and the Leakage/Surplus Ratio represents the difference between Total Potential and Total Sales. The Leakage/Surplus Ratio is a measure of the degree to which retail sales are below the potential sales. The Leakage/Surplus Ratio is calculated as Leakage/Surplus Ratio = Total Potential - Total Sales. The Leakage/Surplus Factor is calculated as Leakage/Surplus Factor = Leakage/Surplus Ratio / Total Potential.
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Rivera, J., Gonzales, M., & Thompson, S. (2013). Land morphology and adaptation: Landuse change in Rio Arriba [Research project at UNM Community and Regional Planning].


References

Truchas Street Art

Rio Chama Acequia Management System