



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Sandoval County Manager Wayne Johnson Officially Joins AREA Board of Directors as First in New Public Sector Partner Model**

(ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.) – The Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA) recently transformed its organizational structure to allow it to become a true public private partnership made up of key business leaders as well as representatives of local government entities within the greater Albuquerque region.

The new structure invites local government entities to engage in the organization under an inclusive, transparent model where all may receive a similar menu of economic development services such as regional marketing support, new lead generation, efforts to attract needed commercial space development, and data and research analysis for economic development purposes. Sandoval County is the first local government partner to formally engage with AREA under this new arrangement. In service to this agreement, County Manager Wayne Johnson has joined the AREA Board of Directors as Sandoval County's representative.

"Sandoval County is experiencing significant growth and is excited about its potential as a key driver in the region's future economic success. We also recognize that we must work as a unified region if that success is to be realized. AREA brings resources to the table that allow for collaboration in strategic efforts that benefit the entire region," said Wayne Johnson, Sandoval County Manager.

Added County Commission Chair Michael Meek, "This expansion of resources, coupled with the recruitment of Mayling Armijo as our new Deputy County Manager who brings with her more than a decade of demonstrated economic development success in the metro area and a prior decade in the financial industry, are key investments in our economic future."

In addition to engaging with AREA as a larger regional economic development entity, this partnership also recognizes the critical importance of local level economic development service



and expertise. In Sandoval County, that local organization is Sandoval Economic Alliance (SEA) led by CEO and President Fred Shepherd. Shepherd will serve alongside Sandoval County Economic Development Director Dora Dominguez as representatives of Sandoval County on AREA's Economic Development Professionals Advisory Council.

"Thanks to the support of our Board, our partners, and local community leaders, SEA has been working diligently to grow the economy within Sandoval County through our strategic Economic Gardening and business retention and expansion programs. In addition, our VeriReady program markets publicly and privately-owned verified sites suitable for development. This partnership expands both SEA and AREA's expertise, resources and experience collectively," added Shepherd.

"This embrace of regionalism, transparency, and leveraging AREA's expertise to support all partners in attracting and growing firms is taking root and will increase our ability to attract companies to the region. Businesses choose economic markets, not local jurisdictional borders," said Danielle Casey, President & CEO for AREA.

"We must optimize our collective resources to benefit the region, not only the metro area but all of our regional and unique communities. We have always been grateful for the partnerships and service agreements that AREA has had with a number of public sector organizations, such as Bernalillo County and City of Albuquerque, and are excited to moving towards this obvious next step to maximizing our impact," said Cynthia Schultz, Board Chair of AREA.

### **About Sandoval County**

Today, Sandoval County encompasses 3,714 square miles of diverse geography and has a population of approximately 150,000 people. It includes the incorporated municipalities of Bernalillo, Cuba, Corrales, Jemez Springs, Rio Rancho and San Ysidro, as well as numerous unincorporated communities, and all or portions of seven Indian pueblos and all or portions of six Tribal entities/lands.

### **About Sandoval Economic Alliance**

Sandoval Economic Alliance (SEA) is a private, not-for-profit economic development corporation established to strengthen and diversify the economic base of Sandoval County, including the municipalities of Bernalillo, Corrales, Cuba, Jemez Springs, and Rio Rancho. SEA provides a broad



range of free and confidential services to businesses and industries considering new locations for expansion, relocation, or consolidation. Services include identifying sites, facilities, incentive programs, and workforce research while cultivating local and state support. SEA also assists existing businesses through retention and expansion programs, as well as, economic gardening to foster positive growth in the business community.

### **About AREA**

The Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is leads and executes strategies designed to grow and diversify the economic base of the greater Albuquerque region, creating a prosperous, diverse and inclusive economy and elevating the standard of living for all. AREA provides confidential assistance to businesses considering the area for expansion and new investment. Since its creation in 1960, AREA has recruited more than 250 companies and more than 35,000 jobs to the Albuquerque metro area. AREA also provides retention and expansion assistance to existing industry. For more information, visit [ABQ.org](http://ABQ.org).

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