

## Colfax County Workforce Profile

**Developed by SER – Jobs for Progress  
For the  
Northern Area Local Workforce Board**

Northeastern New Mexico is a vast historical landscape whose people still convey the results of the melding of cultures. As the older Spanish Empire reached Santa Fe, the young Americans made their way West along what became the Santa Fe Trail. Wagon after wagon traversed the Great Plains in search of a new life, prosperity and a place to call their own. Spanish settlers coming in contact with and trading with, European immigrants and American pioneers.

The Santa Fe Trail consisted of two main branches: the original route called the Mountain Branch, which passed through Cimarron, and the Cimarron Cutoff, named for the town near Dodge City, Kansas. The route of the Mountain Branch follows present-day I-25 over Raton Pass (along the railroad tracks) and parallels Hwy 64 to Cimarron, crossing in front of the Visitor Center and across the Cimarron River to Old Town. The two branches met at Fort Union, 90 miles south of Cimarron and the main fort offering protection for travelers along the Trail. Traces of the Santa Fe Trail can still be seen nearby. One mile north of town along Hwy 64 is a sign noting where the Trail crossed the highway from north to south.



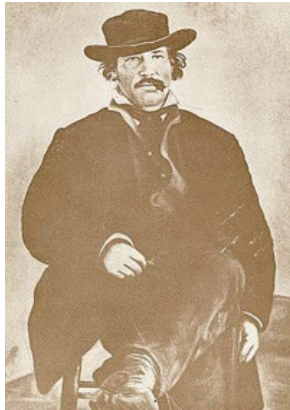
Plaza Looking West

In Spanish, Cimarron means “wild and unruly,” harking back to the historical turbulence of this now peaceful community. The area was once part of the controversial Maxwell Land Grant, which eventually caused the Colfax County War in the late 1800s. In

addition to Cimarron's rich Native American heritage, Spanish settlers, homesteaders, trappers, traders, and many other colorful characters made this beautiful area their home.

In the 1800s, few towns had such a reputation for gunplay and violence as Cimarron, New Mexico. Once luridly lawless, today this peaceful town echoes the sights and sounds of its historic past. You can still see ruts of the Santa Fe Trail.

As the Santa Fe Railroad found its way west in the late 1800's, Springer became the center of trade for the area serving settlers, farmers, ranchers and travelers heading to California. The once thriving frontier (wild west) towns of Cimarron and Springer eventually gave way to the excitement being generated further south in neighboring Las Vegas, where the railroad had its largest impact in the region. Notably, the village of Rayado, nestled in the eastern ridge of the foothills surrounding Cimarron was home to Kit Carson and is the home of the world famous Philmont Scout Ranch.



*Mr. Lucien B Maxwell*  
*Source: Colfax County*



*Lucien B. Maxwell House*

As the railroad found its way west, another chapter in the great American dream was born. Merchants set their sites on new opportunities and the West once more. Mr. Lucien B Maxwell was the sole owner of an enormous tract of land now known as the Maxwell Land Grant, which lies primarily in Colfax County. The town that is now Springer was once called Maxwell in honor of the famous land baron.

Carson and Maxwell initially chose to settle along Rayado Creek in the late 1840s and helped man an army post there attached to Fort Union. In the mid-1850s they decided that the site of present-day Cimarron was a better location to start a town, probably

because the Cimarron River was more reliable than the Rayado.



Cimarron 1877 Source: [http://www.cimarronnm.com/historic\\_cimarron\\_photo\\_gallery.htm](http://www.cimarronnm.com/historic_cimarron_photo_gallery.htm)

In 1880 the railroad arrived in Santa Fe, relegating the Trail to history. In 1906 a railroad spur arrived in Cimarron; following the Trail from Raton down Hwy 64 and continuing 15 miles further west to the small town of Ute Park. Portions of the old rail bed can still be seen beside the highway in the canyon; the rails and cars were sold around 1940 during the war.



Train Station

Oxford Hotel

Swastika Hotel

The station of the St. Louis, Rocky Mountain and Pacific Railroad was located about 100 yards east of the Cimarron Visitor Center. A large influx of people followed the arrival of the railroad and most of the stores along Ninth Street on the north side of the park date from 1906-1910; this area north of the river is referred to as New Town. Because newcomers preferred to live near the source of their livelihood (the railroad), Old Town remained undisturbed and looks pretty much the same as it did 150 years ago when Maxwell first settled and governed this territory. Compare Cimarron's plaza with that of Taos, Santa Fe or Albuquerque and you'll see how little things have changed here.



Cimarron Plaza

Rich in colorful history, Colfax County encompasses the land where the Great Plains meet the Rocky Mountains. Colfax County is a largely rural area consisting of sparsely populated towns, villages, farming communities and cattle ranches.

The city of Raton is the county seat and has the largest concentration of inhabitants in Colfax County. Small independent businesses are located throughout the area and include the harvesting and processing of forest products, oil and gas mining and exploration, independent utilities companies, tourism, mountain sports recreation areas, dining and lodging entities, medical services, building contractors, oil and gas contractors and sub contractors such as: drilling contractors, road construction contractors, electrical contractors, field pump service providers and related.

Retail sales and services are available through single owner mom and pop establishments and the usual mix of fast food enterprises. In Colfax County there is no market penetration by larger chain retailers such as Wal-Mart etc.

**Colfax County** is a county located in the U.S. state of New Mexico. As of 2000, the population is 14,189. Its county seat is Raton It is the home of Philmont Scout Ranch, who's Ranger Department conducts all search-and-rescue operations in the county in return for use of the county's helicopters.

**Geography** According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 9,759 km<sup>2</sup> (3,768 mi<sup>2</sup>). 9,730 km<sup>2</sup> (3,757 mi<sup>2</sup>) of it is land and 29 km<sup>2</sup> (11 mi<sup>2</sup>) of it (0.30%) is water.

A large portion of the County lies in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Wheeler Peak, elevation 13,161 feet, is the tallest mountain in New Mexico and is located in Colfax County. Geography ranges from prairies, so pinion forests, to alpine meadows.

The County contains numerous state parks, ski resorts, national forests, scenic vistas, and outdoor recreational activities.

**Demographics** As of the census of 2000, there were 14,189 people, 5,821 households, and 3,975 families residing in the county. The population density was 1/km<sup>2</sup> (4/mi<sup>2</sup>). There were 8,959 housing units at an average density of 1/km<sup>2</sup> (2/mi<sup>2</sup>). The racial makeup of the county was 81.50% White, 0.32% Black or African American, 1.47% Native American, 0.32% Asian, 0.01% Pacific Islander, 12.80% from other races, and 3.59% from two or more races. 47.49% of the populations were Hispanic or Latino of any race.

There were 5,821 households out of which 30.30% had children under the age of 18 living with them, 52.80% were married couples living together, 10.30% had a female householder with no husband present, and 31.70% were non-families. 27.70% of all households were made up of individuals and 11.90% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older. The average household size was 2.37 and the average family size was 2.86.

In the county the population was spread out with 25.10% under the age of 18, 6.90% from 18 to 24, 24.50% from 25 to 44, 26.50% from 45 to 64, and 16.90% who were 65 years of age or older. The median age was 41 years. For every 100 females there were 102.70 males. For every 100 females age 18 and over, there were 98.30 males.

The median income for a household in the county was \$30,744, and the median income for a family was \$36,827. Males had a median income of \$26,736 versus \$19,644 for females. The per capita income for the county was \$16,418. About 12.00% of families and 14.80% of the population were below the poverty line, including 21.20% of those under age 18 and 9.00% of those ages 65 or over.

### **Priority Industries and Industry Clusters:**

The Northern Board has developed plans to provide all businesses with a range of value-added services to meet their workforce requirements. The services focus on referral of qualified applicants to any Northern Area business requesting the services. While workforce services will continue to be available to all businesses in the Northern Area, the Board's identification of priority industries reflects its intention to target businesses in priority industries. The purpose of identifying priority industries is to better focus the Northern Board's resources (and in accordance with New Mexico's One-Stop Guide), within an area. Selection of Priority Industries are or most likely will be high-growth/high-wage, to provide job and career opportunities for workers and to contribute significantly to the quality of life in the Northern Area and to the wealth of the state of New Mexico.

The Northern Board may designate an industry "priority" based on a number of factors, including the following: growing industry (i.e., increasing employment and payrolls); significant numbers of new and existing businesses; contribution to the Area's quality of life; clear paths or opportunities for career mobility and promotion; and high-wage, high-growth.

The following Industries meet the guidelines as identified by the NALWDB and are suggested priority industries:

- **Health Services**
- **Small Business**
- **Accommodation and Food Services**

Career clusters are groups of related industries that share common resources, like raw materials or equipment, and employ workers who have similar interests and abilities. New Mexico has identified 7 strategic market sectors or “clusters” as the foundation for its future economy-its careers and businesses.

Technological advances and global competition have transformed the nature of work. Jobs available today, and certainly the jobs available in the future, will require more knowledge, better skills, and more flexibility in the workplace.

Many issues challenge our education and economic systems – changing demographics, development and use of technology, generational differences in the workforce, among others. At the center of these challenges is a growing gap between the skills our economy demands and the preparedness of our workforce to meet these demands – the skills gap.

Historically there has been a shared commitment to integrate academic and technical learning based on standards; and connecting education with careers. The cluster level, is broader, and incorporates the skills and knowledge needed, regardless of what pathway or specialty is chosen. The pathway level narrows to a range of careers and skills and knowledge required for a specific Industry. Within each career cluster there are anywhere from two to seven career pathways. As a framework for grouping occupations according to common knowledge and skills, career clusters serve as an organizer for instruction. Sequences of courses can move learners through a progression of knowledge and skills, leading to attainment of durable, portable competency. Aligning instruction to the career cluster knowledge and skills creates a fundamentally different type of instruction where academic and technical instructions are blended and transitions among learner levels are seamless.

Career clusters offer individuals valuable options. They prepare workers to face the uncertainties and volatility of the 21<sup>st</sup> century job market with the skills to be successful in a number of potential careers.

Emphasizes will be given to the NALWDB Priority of Industries and associated Industry Clusters focusing on:

- ✚ Skill requirements for specific jobs or career paths;
- ✚ Training requirements for emerging, incumbent and/or expanding workforces;
- ✚ Challenges pertaining to employee attraction and retention

**Health Services:** \_The New Mexico Department of Labor projects 47,870 new jobs will be created in the healthcare sector over the next 6 years. The fastest growth within the health services industry is anticipated to occur within the ambulatory health care services, approaching 44 percent and growing by 13,170 jobs. Nursing and residential care facilities are projected to add 4,460 jobs, equating to roughly 35 percent growth, growing from 12,770 jobs in 2002 to 17,230 in 2012. Social assistance employment is projected to

increase by 41.4 percent, rising from 15,350 jobs in 2002 to 21,710 in 2012. There were 40 work locations in this industry in Colfax County in 2006, with a total of 906 employees. The average weekly wage for Sector (2 digit) Health Care and Social Assistance in Colfax County in 2nd Quarter, 2006 was \$596. This would be equivalent to \$14.90 per hour or \$30,992 per year, assuming a 40-hour week worked the year around.

Source: Work in New Mexico <http://www.workinnewmexico.gov/clusters.html>

❖ **Health and Biosciences Cluster Definition:** The career cluster is comprised of courses and/or programs related to planning, managing and providing diagnostic, therapeutic, and information and environmental services in health care and to planning, managing, and providing scientific professional and technical services in the biosciences, including laboratory testing and Research and Development.

❖ **Health and Biosciences Industry Sector Clusters:**

- Healthcare
- Information Technology
- Research and Development
- Homeland Security
- Social Services Home Medical Equipment
- Law

❖ **Types of Business in Health and Biosciences Industry Cluster:**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home Medical Equipment</li> <li>• Hospitals</li> <li>• Agri-engineering</li> <li>• Equipment Sales</li> <li>• Science Research and Development</li> <li>• Telemedicine</li> <li>• Social Work/Counseling</li> <li>• Forensics</li> <li>• Social Work/Counseling</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental, Waste Engineering</li> <li>• Electronic Records</li> <li>• Medical Transcription</li> <li>• Insurance</li> <li>• Laboratory Testing</li> <li>• Pharmaceuticals</li> <li>• Disaster Management</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

❖ **Health and Biosciences Industry Cluster Transferable Knowledge and Skills:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trigonometry</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical and Biological Sciences</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

- Business Strategy
- Drafting
- Technical Writing
- Grammar and Spelling
- Advanced Reading Comprehension
- Computer Programs and Systems
- Statistics
- Global Awareness
- Customer Service
- Listening
- Teamwork
- Public Speaking/Verbal Communication

### **Current Economic Related to Health and Social Services Activity:**

Source: The University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research  
NMDOL Laser market analysis

Industry	Average Establishments	Employment			Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage
		04/06	05/06	06/06		
Health Care and Social Assistance	40	893	900	925	906	\$596
Ambulatory Health Care Services	20	106	105	108	106	\$649
Hospitals	***	***	***	***	***	***
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	***	***	***	***	***	***
Social Assistance	14	97	98	124	106	\$528

*Note: Asterisks indicate non-disclosable data*

**Small Business:** Business Services companies provide the backbone for any productive business environment. They are a strong sector of employment in the New Mexico economy. As national and multinational companies around the country streamline operations to compete in a global economy, they are increasingly consolidating finance and human resources divisions into one central location. # of these so-called combined service centers have already relocated to New Mexico and employ approximately #. In addition, New Mexico has an advantage as corporations seek to provide business services to the growing Hispanic population. Since 2005, two national corporations have announced they will locate bi-lingual business service operations in New Mexico that intend to employ over 1,100. According to the New Mexico Department of Labor, employment in professional and business services is projected to increase from 98,710 to 125,590 jobs or 27.2 percent during the 2002 to 2012 period. Administrative support positions are projected to experience the fastest growth within the professional and business services industry growing by 49.4% and adding 20,650 jobs. Management of companies and services jobs is projected to grow by 34.5 percent or 1,880 jobs. Professional, scientific and technical services are projected to add 3,880 jobs or grow 7.7 percent. In McKinley County there were 222 work locations in this industry in 2006, with

a total of 3,373 employees. The average weekly wage for Retail Trade in McKinley County in 2nd Quarter, 2006 was \$404. This would be equivalent to \$10.10 per hour or \$21,008 per year, assuming a 40-hour week worked the year around. The retail trade industry with its 222 establishments 3,373 employees in McKinley County is by far the largest member in the Small Business/Retail Trade cluster. There were 78 work locations in this industry in Colfax County in 2006, with a total of 630 employees. The average weekly wage for Sector (2 digit) Retail Trade in Colfax County in 2nd Quarter, 2006 was \$358. This would be equivalent to \$8.95 per hour or \$18,616 per year, assuming a 40-hour week worked the year around. Source: <http://laser.state.nm.us/default.asp>

Source: <http://laser.state.nm.us/indprofilrdata.asp>

❖ **Small Business Cluster Definition:** The cluster is comprised of courses and/or programs related to planning, managing and providing administrative support, information processing, accounting, and human resources management services and related management support services and to planning, managing and providing banking, investment, financial planning, and insurance services.

❖ **Small Business Industry Sector Clusters:**

- Administrative Services
- Professional Services
- Financial Services
- Customer Support
- Information Technology and Management Consulting
- Sales and Marketing
- Entrepreneurship

❖ **Small Business Industry Cluster Types of Business:**

- Human Resources
- Consulting
  - IT
  - Management
  - Financial
  - Sales
- Insurance
- Law
- Teaching and Training
- Retail Trade
- Contact (Call) Centers
- Accounting
- Investment
- Banking
- Logistics
  - Transportation
  - Warehousing/Facilities
- Public and Community Relations
- Economic Development

❖ **Small Business Industry Cluster Knowledge and Skills:**

- Calculus
- Business Strategy
- Advanced Writing
- Business and Technical Writing
- Reading Comprehension
- Statistics
- Customer Service
- Financial Accounting
- Logic Critical Thinking

- Information Research and Analysis
- Public Speaking/Verbal Communication
- Computer Literacy
- Global Awareness
- Teamwork
- Entrepreneurship

### **Current Economic Related to Small Business/Retail Trade Activity:**

Source: The University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research  
NMDOL Laser market analysis

Industry	Average Establishments	Employment			Average Employment	Average Weekly Wage
		04/06	05/06	06/06		
Retail Trade	78	607	640	644	630	\$358
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	9	64	65	65	65	\$442
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	***	***	***	***	***	***
Electronics and Appliance Stores	***	***	***	***	***	***
Building Material & Garden Supply Stores	6	84	86	88	86	\$427
Food and Beverage Stores	5	118	126	125	123	\$377
Health and Personal Care Stores	***	***	***	***	***	***
Gasoline Stations	18	161	171	178	170	\$330
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	5	17	19	19	18	\$231
Sporting Goods/Hobby/Book/Music Stores	4	8	10	9	9	\$253
General Merchandise Stores	6	67	71	59	66	\$267
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	16	30	35	41	35	\$218
Nonstore Retailers	5	34	32	34	33	\$493

*Note: Asterisks indicate non-disclosable data*

**Accommodations and Food Service:** The Accommodation and Food Services sector comprises establishments providing customers with lodging and/or preparing meals, snacks, and beverages for immediate consumption. The sector includes both accommodation and food services establishments because the two activities are often combined at the same establishment. Excluded from this sector are civic and social organizations; amusement and recreation parks; theaters; and other recreation or entertainment facilities providing food and beverage services. There were 67 work

locations in this industry in Colfax County in 2006, with a total of 902 employees. The average weekly wage Accommodation and Food Services in Colfax County in 2nd Quarter , 2006 was \$303. This would be equivalent to \$7.58 per hour or \$15,756 per year, assuming a 40-hour week worked the year around.

❖ **Accommodation and Food Service Cluster Definition:** The career cluster is comprised of courses and/or programs related to hospitality and tourism and to planning, managing and providing lodging, food, recreation, convention and tourism, and related planning and support services such as travel-related services.

❖ **Accommodation and Food Service Industry Sectors:**

- Parks
- Cultural and Historical Sites
- Hotels and Lodging
- Gaming
- Food Services
- Travel and Tourism
- Wholesale and Retail Trade

❖ **Types of Business in Accommodation and Food Service Industry Cluster:**

- Travel
- Tours
- Restaurants
- Catering
- Hotels/Bed and Breakfast Inns
- Resorts
- Casinos
- Special Event Planning
- Camps
- Retail Trade
- Grounds keeping and Landscaping
- Logistics/Warehousing/Facilities
- Visitors and Convention Bureaus
- Marketing
- Ticket Sales
- Equipment Rental
- Transportation

❖ **Accommodation and Food Service Industry Cluster Knowledge and Skills:**

- Geometry
- Finance
- Business Strategy
- Technical Writing
- Grammar and Spelling
- Reading Comprehension
- Computer Programs and Systems
- Statistics
- Global Awareness
- Customer Service
- Listening
- Teamwork
- Public Speaking/Verbal Communication

## **Current Economic Related to Food and Accommodation Activity:**

Source: The University of New Mexico Bureau of Business and Economic Research  
NMDOL Laser market analysis

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Average Establishments</b>	<b>Employment</b>			<b>Average Employment</b>	<b>Average Weekly Wage</b>
		<b>04/06</b>	<b>05/06</b>	<b>06/06</b>		
Accommodation and Food Services	67	844	892	970	902	\$303
Accommodations	30	435	471	505	470	\$412
Food Services and Drinking Places	37	409	421	465	432	\$183

## **Economic Initiatives:**

- Activity is developing in southeast Colorado on the development of two underground coal mines in the Raton Basin, where the last such mines were shut in the mid-1990s.

In the 1990s, Picketwire Processing LLC was formed to control the New Elk prep plant and a long-shut deep mine called New Elk in Las Animas County,

The New Elk Coal transfer request for the Picketwire permits is pending, because of technical issues related to new reclamation bonding. In the meantime, New Elk Coal is seeking permission from the DMG to perform dewatering in the old New Elk mine, which was called the Allen mine when it was first developed in the 1950s by CF&I Steel Corp.

If there is no major rehabilitation needed for the old mine works, New Elk Coal is shooting to put this mine back into production in late 2007 or early 2008. Initial production would be in the Allen coal seam, with the Maxwell seam on the property a prime target for later production. There are approximately 37 million tons of in-place coals currently in hand for New Elk Coal in the Allen seam.

The New Elk Coal plan is for a room-and-pillar operation that would produce roughly 500,000 tons per year in a first phase, and then ramp up to 2 million tons per year in a second phase. A key feature of the second phase is replacing the tracks that were ripped out a few years ago by the Trinidad Railway, which controlled the rail line that led from New Elk, past the Lorencito property, to connections with the Union Pacific and BNSF railroads.

Coal from the initial phase of mining could be trucked to rail or directly to customers within a 100-mile radius of the mine. Potential customers within that radius include cement makers and other industrials. Source: <http://www.topix.net/city/raton-nm>

- There is proposed construction of a new race track and casino in Raton, New Mexico, which is nestled among the majestic Sangre de Cristo Mountains of Northeast New Mexico and where Interstate 25 and Highway 64/87 meet. The proposed \$40 million track and casino would employ approximately 300 people. The investors for the casino have applied for a license in September 2005, but the license is pending upon approval by the State Racing Commission, and results of a state study on the impact Zia Park race track in Hobbs has had on that city's economy.
- The county is planning a website to promote the county year-round tourism, paying attention to the incorporated areas from Springer and Cimarron to Eagle Nest and Angel Fire. A wide variety of year-round outdoor and recreational opportunities in the district are offered by the Carson National Forest, Cimarron Canyon State Park, Colin Neblett State Wildlife Area, Eagle Nest Lake State Park, Sugarite Canyon State Park, to historic sites such as the Santa Fe Trail Interpretive Center and Museum in Springer. In addition, the District offers a four-season resort, Philmont Scout Ranch, and the Vietnam National Memorial State Park for tourism that brings millions of dollars each year to the county.

Source: <http://www.co.colfax.nm.us/faq.htm>