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## **Lea County and Jal Join Certified Communities List**

SANTA FE, N.M. – The New Mexico Economic Development Department announces that Lea County and the City of Jal have completed the requirements necessary to become Certified Communities.

“Obtaining this certification shows that a community is making a serious commitment to develop local business,” stated Economic Development Department Cabinet Secretary Fred Mondragón. “The hard work that Lea County and the City of Jal have done to complete this process proves that they are ready to move forward.”

The Certified Communities Initiative Program (CCI) encourages and supports New Mexico communities in their efforts to create new jobs. The initiative emphasizes the importance of recruitment, as well as retention/expansion and start-up activities. The initiative recognizes that the character and needs of each community will determine how these methods are used to create new jobs.

Communities work with Regional Representative Teams on the application process, which includes passing a Local Economic Development Act. Communities are then provided with a \$4,000 CCI grant over two years.

*About the communities:* Lea County lies along the border with Texas in southeast New Mexico and includes the communities of Hobbs, Lovington, Eunice, Tatum and Jal. With its strong history of oil and gas production coupled with its future in renewable energy production, the county has deemed itself the “EnergyPlex.”

Jal is a community of approximately 2,000 that lies in the southeast corner of Lea County. They are concentrating on industry and technology development.

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