REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
REGIONAL COALITION OF LANL COMMUNITIES
BOARD RETREAT, MAY 16, 2014

Prepared by

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May 30, 2014
This report summarizes the Regional Coalition of LANL Communities’ May 16th Board of Directors retreat.

Board members present:
   Alice Lucero, Mayor, City of Española
   Fran Berting, Councilor, Los Alamos County
   Joe Maestas, Councilor, City of Santa Fe
   Tom Blankenhorn, Commissioner, Taos County
   Steve Girrens, Councilor, Los Alamos County
   David Trujillo, Assistant Manager, Rio-Arriba County

Executive director management team members present:
   Darien Cabral, Executive Director
   Jennifer Padilla, JLH Media
   Jennifer Hobson-Hinsley, JLH Media

Economic development professionals who offered perspectives at the retreat:
   David Griscom – Santa Fe County
   Fabian Trujillo – City of Santa Fe
   Chris Madrid – Rio Arriba County
   Greg Fisher – Los Alamos County
   Kathy Keith – Regional Development Corporation
   John Mott – Feyman Center

David Abelson, Director, Crescent Strategies, LLC, facilitated the meeting and has prepared this report. Brian Bosshardt, Deputy County Administrator, Los Alamos County, assisted with meeting management.

**Background on the Regional Coalition of LANL Communities**
The Regional Coalition is rooted in the idea that by coming together to proactively address issues, these governments are better poised to define the public interest and ensure national policies protect and promote local interests. Those interests are environmental, economic and cultural. As congressional delegations and communities from other Department of Energy (DOE) facilities can attest, regional partnerships such as the Regional Coalition strengthen the decision-making process and are integral to the communities’ long-term economic viability.

A central component of the Regional Coalition’s work is addressing environmental liabilities. That effort includes the evaluation of cleanup planning, implementation, and oversight for protection of workers and neighboring communities. It likewise includes ensuring decisions made at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) are consistent with community values and goals.

Economic issues are critical to the Regional Coalition’s mission. As provided in the Regional Coalition’s strategic plan, “Sustaining and diversifying LANL’s missions and protecting the
environment through design, planning and execution are central to the site’s long-term viability and, in turn, essential to the long-term economic and social health of the regional communities.”

The key question for the Regional Coalition concerns what economic development means in the context of its efforts, and, specifically, how the Regional Coalition can marshal its political strengths to advocate for and otherwise support existing regional economic development efforts.

Finally, advancing the organization’s goals and priorities requires strong communications. That effort is part education, part advocacy.

**Observations from the retreat**

The Regional Coalition continues to make progress in fulfilling its goals of securing funding for cleanup, which is both an environmental and jobs issue, and helping define local interests as DOE and the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) establish cleanup priorities. With Darien Cabral and JLH Media as the executive director management team, the Regional Coalition has in place a team that can help advance economic development issues, the part of the Regional Coalition’s strategic plan that has received less attention. The challenge facing economic development efforts is defining the Regional Coalition’s role given the many existing, effective efforts.

To be successful moving forward there are certain critical steps that the organization must take, most of which were defined during the retreat or came up in meetings David Abelson, the meeting facilitator, had with the executive director management team and Board members prior to the retreat. David’s key recommendations are:

1. The Board of Directors must work together and with the executive director management team to define the organization’s strategic course. That includes developing an annual work plan, and, based on that plan, scoping agenda topics one-to-three months in advance.
2. The executive director management team must have a clear sense of the Board’s expectations so that it can best serve the Board’s interests and effectively implement the work plan.
3. The goals and intent of each meeting must be clearly defined.
4. As agreed to at the retreat, the organization must balance its focus on environmental and economic development issues. To date, the Board has emphasized environmental issues, including cleanup funding. That work must continue while expanding its focus on economic development issues.
5. The executive director management team must maintain close ties to DOE, NMED and LANS, as a strong working relationship will be central to advising the Board on its strategic direction and identifying opportunities for substantive Board engagement. Frequent contact with these parties is essential.
6. For now, the executive director management team must narrow its focus to (a) strengthen relationships will all member governments, (b) establish the framework and develop the initial draft of the work plan, (c) analyze opportunities to engage economic development opportunities, and (d) identify opportunities to influence existing cleanup actions and future cleanup campaigns.
7. Be aware of local government politics. It is critical that the executive director management team does not advance issues that pit one government against another. Disagreement amongst member governments is part of the process, but political considerations must be understood when managing this type of organization.

**SUMMARY OF BOARD RETREAT**

**What the Board hoped to achieve at the meeting**
At the start of the meeting, the Board and the executive director management team identified what it hoped to accomplish at the retreat. These ideas are summarized as follows:

1. **Work plan:**
   a. Identify what the Regional Coalition wants to accomplish and where it goes from here.
   b. Identify Board priorities for both environmental remediation and economic development.
   c. Develop the framework for an achievable work plan that is integrated with the existing strategic plan, and begin developing the framework for its work over next three-to-six months.
   d. In the work plan, balance environmental remediation and economic development.

2. **Organizational management:**
   a. Provide direction to the executive director management team, including the Board’s expectations.
   b. Develop a process for all governments to contribute to the meeting agenda.

3. **Economic development:**
   a. Define what economic development looks like within the scope of the Regional Coalition.
   b. Clarify the Regional Coalition’s economic development path and coordinate efforts with other groups.

The Board either met each goal or set the course for addressing each item.

**Environmental remediation priorities**
The Board agreed in the importance and value of ensuring that decisions made at the federal and state level about cleanup priorities and related actions include local interests and priorities. There was discussion regarding the ability of the Regional Coalition to influence cleanup decisions being made by DOE, LANS and NMED. At the same time, there was also discussion that DOE is interested in working with the Regional Coalition as it establishes cleanup priorities.

The cessation of TRU waste shipments to WIPP created uncertainty regarding DOE and NMED’s path forward on the Framework Agreement and Consent Order, and in turn the type of decisions that would be made in the coming months and year. The Board remains strongly interested in evaluating cleanup options and priorities, and weighing risk reduction, costs, and
other factors that are integral to establishing the path forward on environmental remediation. Accordingly, the Board agreed to approach environmental remediation as follows:

1. Understand DOE, NMED, and LANS’ cleanup priorities, and engage in priority setting. That analysis includes understanding
   a. Environmental media affected;
   b. Risk reduction that would be achieved;
   c. Cost;
   d. Work health and safety;
   e. Employment needs; and
   f. Other issues not yet identified.
2. Understand the path forward on the WIPP-3706 campaign, including what role, if any, the Regional Coalition can occupy as part of that campaign.
3. Understand next steps on Consent Order with TRU waste shipments to WIPP being halted for 18-36 months.
4. Define the Regional Coalition’s realm of influence and advocate for community priorities.
5. Identify opportunities to influence DOE, NMED and LANS decisions, and, as appropriate, advocate for adequate funding with Congress.
6. Evaluate options for remediating the chromium plume, and understand stormwater management issues.
7. Develop a unified voice on cleanup issues.
8. Support the campaign approach to cleanup such as the one that was utilized in the TRU waste 3706 campaign.

Economic development – evaluation parameters
The Board developed a set of parameters that it will use to evaluate its engagement on economic development issues, but noted the Regional Coalition is not an economic development organization. For that reason, the Board stressed that in evaluating economic development opportunities, it is imperative that the organization pay close attention the role of other organizations, if any, working on the given project, and in turn the specific role that the Regional Coalition would occupy.

The parameters the Board developed for evaluating its engagement on economic development issues are:

1. Explain the connection of the project to LANL;
2. Identify what other organizations are working on the project, and the role of each;
3. Explain how the project affects the Regional Coalition’s strategic interests;
4. Explain the specific role(s) for the Regional Coalition in advancing the project (i.e., advocacy, communication, coalition building);
5. Identify how the Regional Coalition will leverage its resources; and
6. Identify and explain which governments/communities would be affected by the project, explain the impacts, and identify any intergovernmental conflict that would emerge should the Regional Coalition pursue this project.
The executive director management team will conduct the initial analysis. Should the management team determine that a project is or might be worth pursuing, that recommendation will be brought to the executive committee for further review. Should the executive committee determine that the Regional Coalition’s engagement is warranted, that recommendation will be forwarded to the Board for its review and approval.

**Economic development – potential projects**
The Board, executive director management team, and economic development professionals in attendance identified the following projects that could warrant the Regional Coalition’s engagement. None, though, were vetted through the economic development evaluation parameters at the meeting, so an analysis by the executive director management team is needed.

1. Los Alamos Supply Chain Management Center (SCMC)
2. LANS Community Commitment Plan
3. REDI
4. REDINET (and broadband in general)
5. Flut
6. Ealasid
7. Workforce development
8. Feyman Center advocacy
9. Promote northern New Mexico economic development

It was also noted that many of these opportunities are projects of the Regional Development Corporation.

**Role of the executive committee**
One item that emerged was that the executive committee’s role is not clearly defined. The Board took initial steps to better define the committee’s role. Moving forward, the executive committee will:

1. Meet with the executive director management team (via conference call) the week following the monthly meeting to set the agenda for the following meeting;
2. Conduct the initial review of proposed economic development projects brought forward by the executive director management team; and
3. Manage the executive director management team.

**Expectations of the executive director management team**
In order to determine whether the executive director management team is successful, the Board began broadly defining its expectations of the management team. Specifically, the executive director management team will

1. Issue professional Board meeting packets, and ensure compliance with the following.
   a. Packets will include agendas, briefing memos, and, as needed, supplemental information for each item.
b. Both the agenda and briefing memos will identify the nature of each agenda item, including whether Board action will be needed.
c. Packets will be emailed to the Board and interested members of the public (including the media) no later than one week prior to the Board meeting.

2. Issue a press release following each Board meeting. The release will summarize the briefings, actions taken (if any), and other relevant information.
3. Meet periodically with each director.
4. Work with the Board and executive committee to ensure compliance with the New Mexico Open Meetings Act.

As noted above, regarding the evaluation of potential economic development projects, the executive director management team will analyze and review each potential project, and issue a recommendation to the executive committee if the management team determines that the Regional Coalition’s engagement is or may be warranted. Importantly, should the executive director management team determine that the organization’s engagement is not warranted, that information will not be presented to the executive committee for review.

**Process for developing the Board meeting agenda**
The Board agreed that each government should have an opportunity to identify the agenda items. The Board agreed to the following process:

1. At the end of each meeting, the executive director management team will present to the Board potential/likely work items for the next three meetings. Currently (and for the purposes of this report) this framework is called “Meetings at a Glance.”
2. The entire Board will review and, as necessary, make changes to “Meetings at a Glance.”
3. One week following the Board meeting, the executive committee and executive director management team will meet to set the agenda for the forthcoming meeting.

**Standing agenda items** – The Board agreed that it should receive regular updates on yet-unidentified projects. Examples could include the status of TRU waste shipping campaign, subcontract opportunities, etc. These items were referred to as “standing agenda items.” In the coming months, the Board will work to identify these items and the frequency that it would like to receive updates.

**Communications**
JLH Media has the capacity and skill to advance a comprehensive communications plan. In the coming months as the work plan is developed, the executive director management team will develop a communications plan that will both guide proactive efforts and identify how the organization will respond to inquiries. The following was also agreed to:

1. Jennifer Padilla will be the primary contact with the media;
2. As noted elsewhere, following each meeting, the executive director management team will issue a press release summarizing the meeting and noting Board action, if any, taken; and
3. The executive director management team will develop a press release template.
One challenge that was not fully resolved was the process for responding to media inquiries, especially breaking news. In those circumstances where the organization cannot wait until the next meeting to respond, the executive director management team will contact the Chair, and if time allows, the other members of the executive committee. Time allowing, the Chair will provide guidance on how to respond, and will approve media releases.

The Board recognized that often reporters are on deadline, so there may be instances where the executive director management team and Chair will not have sufficient time to talk. In those circumstances, the executive director management team is charged with handling the media inquiry.

**What a successful meeting entails**
The Board identified two specific items, and two others came up in conversation:

1. Start on time;
2. Following the rules of procedure. Mayor Lucero is charged with developing these rules;
3. Follow the agenda; and
4. Limit the executive director’s report.

**To-do list**
The Board identified the following items.

1. Develop the 2014 work plan. **Lead:** Executive director management team will initiate the effort; project will be completed at Board meetings
2. Evaluate economic development opportunities. **Lead:** Executive director management team
3. Develop the Meetings at a Glance template, and begin developing briefing/discussion items for the next three months. **Lead:** Executive director management team
4. Develop a communications plan. This item will occur once the 2014 work plan is developed and approved by the Board of Directors. **Lead:** Executive director management team will initiate the effort; project will be completed in conjunction with executive committee
5. Establish the process for setting the agenda. **Status:** Completed (see “Agenda Setting” for details)
6. Adopt rule of procedure for Board meetings. **Lead:** Mayor Lucero
7. Develop the template for Board statements. **Lead:** Executive director management team
8. Identify standing agenda items. **Lead:** The Board