



**State of New Mexico
OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR**

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**Auditor Johnson works with local Acequias to proactively
bring them into financial compliance**

Nambe, NM – State Auditor Wayne Johnson’s office is providing audit and financial compliance training for local acequia’s across the state to help them be eligible for and meet the requirements accompanied by receiving state funding.

The trainings, “*Acequia Pathways to Funding: Financial Compliance*” are meant to help acequias stay or come into compliance with laws that require local entities to account for their receipts and expenditures of public funding.

“Acequias are part of the fabric of our community in New Mexico,” said State Auditor Wayne Johnson. “They’re a significant part of our culture, our economy, our food supply chain and our very way of life. I hope these trainings and access to technical assistance from our office helps our acequias not only succeed, but thrive. We want to help these entities understand the audit rule and how it applies to them, because their access to state capital outlay funds will dry up if they don’t.”

Acequias and other small government entities like mutual domestic water consumer associations, land grants, and special districts, are required to comply with state audit rules before they qualify for state funding like capital outlay. Too often, these small entities don’t realize they are non-compliant until an emergency, like a damaged or flooded gate, forces them to seek state funding.

There are as many as 800 Acequias across the state representing 5,000 miles of ditches, with a high concentration of ditches in Rio Arriba County and Northern New Mexico in general, though they can be found in many counties like Sierra, Catron, Grants, and Hidalgo. There are 611 acequias in 22 counties, with anywhere from 3 to more than 800 irrigators. According to the NMAA, there are more than 15,000 “parciantes”, or people with acequia water rights for crops or livestock, throughout the state and 117,000 irrigated acres.

You can see a breakdown of acequias county-by-county here:

https://www.saonm.org/media/uploads/Acequias_by_County_in_New_Mexico_from_the_NM_AA.pdf

“The economic impact in New Mexico is enormous,” Johnson said today. “The market value of livestock and crops produced in Acequia counties is nearly \$200 million and 42% of our farms are in these counties with 186,000 irrigated efforts. Acequias are truly embedded in our economy.”

Auditor Johnson’s office works in coordination with the New Mexico Acequia Association (NMAA) and the state Department of Finance Administration to present the trainings and technical assistance.

“As an association, we’ve focused on helping acequias achieve their goals,” said Serafina Lombardi, the NMAA director of Education and Outreach. “We appreciate Auditor’s Johnson enthusiastic support of this program and look forward to a continued partnership with his office for the benefit of our acequias and parciantes.”

Johnson says the most recent Acequia training was in Nambe, NM, and the next training will be in Truth or Consequences on April 26 at 10am at the T or C Albert J. Lyon Event Center. Another is planned in Pecos, NM on May 10, 2018 at 9am in the Pecos Municipal Building. Trainings have already taken place in Taos, Bloomfield, and Chimayo.

“Historically, acequias were the first type of formal government in this area, up and down the Rio Grande Valley,” said Johnson. “Our acequias have a long history of managing public money and of accountability to their members. We’re very proud of that heritage, and I’m honored to be a part of this process to help our acequias meet their goals.”

About the New Mexico Acequia Association:

The mission of the New Mexico Acequia Association is to protect water and our acequias, grow healthy food for our families and communities, and to honor our cultural heritage. An aspect of fulfilling our mission is assisting acequias in acquiring funding for infrastructure repairs and completing all of the requirements that arise with the repair or improvement project.

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