



NATHANIEL EVANS

Taos Town Councilor, New Mexico
First Elected 2016



WHAT ARE YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT OR IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS AN ELECTED LEADER?

The Strong at Heart Downtown Strategy Project, which is the product of a years-long collaborative, community-driven effort to craft a vision for downtown, as well as a practical, project-oriented plan for making it happen. Strong at Heart is a project of the Town of Taos focused on bringing Taoseños together to create a vision and strategy for downtown Taos. Downtown Taos is the heart of our community, and as the civic and economic center of town, it reflects our history and heritage, as well as our future; it is where we all come together. That is what this project was about: coming together as neighbors to create a shared vision and strategy for the heart of our community. One goal of the project was to create a Taos Downtown Strategy that provides a community vision for downtown and the projects and actions to make it happen. Strong at Heart was more importantly about changing how we engage our community in discussions about the future. It modeled a more inclusive approach to public engagement, and enabled more constructive, community-led conversations about very challenging topics facing our community.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

The biggest challenge is to keep the community's best interest as the driving force. Don't take things personally, make compromises for the better good and maintain a vision for the future.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE CONSIDERING RUNNING FOR OFFICE FOR THE FIRST TIME?

Trust your gut and follow your heart. Ask your partner for their unconditional support, because it can be trying for the whole family.

IS THERE A CONSERVATION, CLIMATE, OR DEMOCRACY-RELATED RULE, POLICY, OR IDEA YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IMPLEMENTED AT THE LOCAL, STATE, AND/OR NATIONAL LEVEL?

Twenty-five percent of climate warming comes from the human-caused release of methane — mainly through livestock and oil and gas industries. The Permian Basin is the largest oil and gas basin in the United States. The Environmental Defense Fund group estimates that methane is leaking from Permian oil and gas facilities at three times what the Environmental Protection Agency estimates, which comes to about 2.7 million tons of gas per year. There needs to be rigorous regulations to stop routine flaring. It wastes critical New Mexican-owned resources that need to go to an already underfunded education system. By capturing this natural resource, we not only protect our environment but also increase state funding as there are no revenues that come from flaring the gas.

