

Welcome from the Mayor



Mayor Ravi Bhasker

Dear Friends,

As the Mayor of Socorro, I would like to thank you for your interest in our beautiful city. The City of Socorro has much to offer visitors, current and future residents. For individuals, families and new business owners who decide to make Socorro their new home, welcome! Socorro has a small town charm, but is large enough to have modern schools, infrastructure/computer lines and medical facilities.

For the new business owners, Socorro has an industrial park with low lease rates and all underground utilities. New Mexico Tech also has a business and research park that is available for new businesses to lease. Nearby, the City of Socorro's renovated airport has two runways, the longest being 5,800 feet. Socorro is also located at the intersection of Interstate 25 and State Highway 60 and has a north to south railroad with a spur to the industrial park.

Locally, the community has many educational, recreational and points of interest including:

- Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge
- The Very Large Array (Radio Telescopes)
- El Camino Real International Heritage and Cultural Center
- Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge
- Magdalena Ridge Observatory
- Trinity Site Open House
- U.S. Forest Service lands
- Bureau of Land Management lands
- Performing Arts Series

We, at the City, hope you will enjoy living in Socorro. If any of us can be of further assistance in your move, please call our office (575)835-0240 or the Chamber of Commerce at (575)835-0424.

Sincerely,

Ravi Bhasker

Mayor, City of Socorro

Climate

Physical Environment

The County of Socorro is beautiful by any standard. It is New Mexico's third largest county in area, covering 6,625 square miles. Its Southwestern landscape is painted with earth tones. Semi-arid plains and wild grasses can be seen within the county's four mountain ranges. Socorro is divided by the second longest river in the United States, the Rio Grande, traveling 1,900 miles from the Continental Divide in Colorado to the tropical delta at the Gulf of Mexico.

The City of Socorro, the county seat, is a technical and industrial haven set in a spacious, breathtaking environment. Cibola National Forest and Bosque del Apache Wildlife Refuge connect with the surrounding desert environment.

Conveniently located on Interstate 25, Socorro is only an hour away from New Mexico's largest commercial center, Albuquerque. At the same time, the air is fresh, the water is pure, and the mountains rise on the horizon – industry and technology right next door to a vast wilderness area.

"...the air is fresh, the water is pure, and the mountains rise on the horizon..."

Climate

Nestled at the base of the western slope of the Magdalena and Ladron mountain ranges, Socorro is protected from the harsh high desert winds and inclement weather. Situated on one of the widest spots of the Rio Grande in New Mexico, and surrounded by mountain peaks reaching over 10,000 feet, the city enjoys a near-perfect four season climate.

Education

Socorro has four elementary schools, one junior high school, one high school and one charter school in its public school system. The Socorro Consolidated School District continues to make positive changes and updates to its infrastructure/equipment/curricula to improve the quality of education for youth.

The New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NM Tech) plays a vital role in the community. It is an important educational and research site that is a source of many of the area's jobs and serves over 2,000 students. NM Tech is a state supported institution offering undergraduate and graduate degrees in science, engineering, and technical fields. Internationally renown, NM Tech is continually rated in the top national universities by Money Magazine and the Princeton Review.

The New Mexico State Fire Academy prepares men and women for challenging positions. Training in firefighting and lifesaving techniques takes place on its campus on the west side of Socorro.

Housing

Socorro is a smaller semi-rural community where residents are extremely friendly. Single family housing costs are both lower and more stable than larger cities. Houses in Socorro range from historical adobe (mud brick) houses to modern high-efficiency homes.

Medical

The Socorro General Hospital is well-equipped to provide a full range of medical services, including family practice, surgery, obstetrics, intensive care, radiology, pathology, urology, cardiology, ophthalmology, and diagnostic services. Opened in 1984, the 32-bed facility is accredited through the Joint Commission of Health Care Organizations.

More than ten physicians and three dentists attend to the medical needs of Socorro. Good Samaritan Village is a nursing home providing care to the elderly and infirm.

An extensive choice of medical specialists and facilities in Albuquerque also provide health care for central New Mexico.

Demographics

Population

The city of Socorro's population is approximately 9,000 with the county population hovering around 19,000. Traditionally a family town, 30 percent of the population is under the age of 18, while the average age is 31 years. The area's Spanish history is strong, as demonstrated by a hispanic population that comprises just over 50 percent of the community.

Labor Force

A trained labor force distinguishes Socorro as a prime target for further development of industry. In particular, the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NM Tech) each year graduates a large number of students trained in professional skills who are seeking positions in a wide range of science and technology-related fields. The civilian labor force in Socorro is about 6,000 persons.

Trade Area

Socorro is located between the state's two largest cities. 74 miles to the north is the major market center of Albuquerque, and 150 miles to the south is the state's second largest city, Las Cruces. El Paso, Texas, is 194 miles south, and Phoenix, Arizona, is 380 miles west. This prime location allows for easy access to national and international markets.

There are more than 13,000 residents within 30 miles of Socorro for whom the city is the economic hub.

Demographics		
Country	United States	
State	New Mexico	
County	Socorro	
Elevation	4,603 ft. (1,403 m)	
Zip Code	87801	
Area Code	575	
	City	County
Population (2000)	8,877	18,078
Density	615.8/sq mi (237.8/km ²)	3/sq mi (1/km ²)
Area	14.4 sq mi (37.4 km ²)	6,649 sq mi (17,221 km ²)
Website	www.socorronm.gov	www.co.socorro.nm.us
Chamber website	www.socorro-nm.com	
Climate		
Average Temperature	January 53°/21°	June 94°/60°
Average Rainfall	8 inches annually	
Utility Rates		
Utility	Supplier	Rate
Electricity	Socorro Electric Cooperative, Inc.	\$9 + \$0.0925/kWH
Natural Gas	City of Socorro	\$5 + unit charge
Water	City of Socorro	\$3.75+ \$.2148/unit
Telephone	Qwest	varies
Solid Waste Disposal	City of Socorro - Landfill	\$13.75/month

Infrastructure

Transportation & Shipping

Highways serving Socorro are US 60 to Phoenix, Arizona and US 380 to Roswell, New Mexico. Interstate 25 takes travelers north to Albuquerque and Santa Fe and South to Las Cruces and El Paso, Texas. Interstate 25 links up with Interstate 40 east/west in nearby Albuquerque.

Socorro has a modern airport with a 5,800-foot runway. Commercial air service is available in Albuquerque. All major U.S. carriers are present in Albuquerque, an international port of entry.

Overnight delivery is available from all major markets in the continental U.S. through Federal Express, UPS, Airborne Express, and DHL Worldwide. Two to three-day worldwide service is available also. Several cartage companies service the Socorro area.

Communications

All major network television stations are received in Socorro. Cable and satellite television are also available. High-speed internet and Wi-Fi are available in Socorro.

One of the original newspapers in Socorro, El Defensor Chieftain, is still published biweekly. The Mountain Mail newspaper also provides biweekly news. The Socorro County Visitor Guide is published each season, as a source of information for visitors and residents. The Albuquerque Journal, a state-wide newspaper published daily in Albuquerque, is available in Socorro.

The U.S. Post Office has a main office in Socorro, along with an office on the NM Tech campus and satellite offices throughout the county.

Utilities

All utilities (natural gas, electric, water, waste water and phone service) are available throughout Socorro and are already installed at the city's industrial park.

Community Structure

The government of the City of Socorro consists of a mayor, an eight-member city council, and a city clerk. The county functions with a five-member county commission and county manager.

Industry and Employment

Research, technology, mining and agriculture have played a major role in Socorro's economy for many years. Scientific research, defense programs, agriculture and NM Tech are the backbones of Socorro's economy. Retail sales and tourism are also significant contributors to local revenues.

Financial Institutions

Historically committed to the support of local business development, three banks have branches in Socorro. One credit union also has a Socorro branch.

Business Sites

Socorro has two industrial parks with space available for lease.

Lodging and Meeting Spaces

Quality accommodations are found in several motels in Socorro. More than 700 rooms are available at 11 motels and 6 Bed and Breakfasts. RV parks and campgrounds provide comfortable but rustic alternatives for visitors to Bosque del Apache and other recreational areas.

Convention facilities and meeting spaces are offered at the Macey Conference Center on the NM Tech Campus. The auditorium has a seating capacity of 600 people, and each of the two attractive conference spaces accommodate 90. The conference center also boasts three patios and a spacious lobby. Indoor and outdoor catering is available at the facility.

Convention, meeting, or event facilities are also available at the Best Western Hotel, the Garcia Opera House, Rancher's Steakhouse, Socorro County Fairgrounds and at the City's Finley Gym Complex.

Heritage

The name Socorro means “help” or “aid” in Spanish. In 1598 the explorers of the Juan de Oñate expedition first gave this name to the Pilabo Pueblo because the Pueblo people gave them needed food and shelter as they made their way north.

Prior to the arrival of the Spanish, indigenous peoples traveled extensively along trails that eventually became a major highway, Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, or Royal Highway of the Interior Lands. The 15,000 mile highway roughly followed the Rio Grande from Santa Fe, south through Socorro, Las Cruces, El Paso and into Mexico.

The Mission of San Miguel was established by two Franciscan priests who arrived with Oñate in 1598. Father Alfonso Benavidez named the village Nuestra Señora de Perpetua Socorro, or Our Lady of Perpetual Help, later simplified to Socorro. The Piro Indians built an impressive Pueblo-style church. Silver was mined and crafted by the Indians to furnish it.

The Piro Tribe of Pilabo left permanently in 1680, fleeing with the Spanish who were expelled during the famed Pueblo revolt, which disrupted Spanish rule for twelve years.

The Spanish hero Don Diego de Vargas returned to New Mexico in 1692 and recaptured the territory for Spain. The area of Socorro remained empty with the town in ruins. By the late 18th century, officials in Santa Fe began planning to resettle the area to protect the trail from Santa Fe to Chihuahua, Mexico. In 1815, the governor of New Mexico ordered the old town of Socorro to be resettled. The Spanish settlers re-entered the Socorro Valley by 1816.

A very large spring at the base of Socorro Mountain provided a more than sufficient water supply for drinking and irrigation. There was fertile land between the Rio Grande and the mountains to the west, and a mild climate.

By the late 1850s, Socorro numbered about 600 people. There were a few visitors from the east, especially after the Mexican War, when New Mexico became part of the United States.

The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad arrived in 1880, and with it a huge influx of people. The population jumped to over 4,000 within two years. In 1886, the present town of Socorro was incorporated. The 1880s and early 1890s were boom years for Socorro. There was extensive mining in the mountains and hills, with smelters to handle the ore. Farming, ranching, and mercantile interests also added to the economy.

In 1889, the New Mexico School of Mines (now New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology or NM Tech) was established, and the first students arrived in 1892.

In the 1890s, with a decline in the price of silver and other metals, Socorro switched from a mining town to other pursuits. It quickly adapted to utilizing its fertile river basin to become an active agricultural haven.

The World War II economy in Socorro was bolstered by top secret experiments conducted at Los Alamos, which resulted in the first atomic bomb. Trinity Site on White Sands Missile Range was the location of the first atomic bomb test.

In the postwar years, Socorro grew slowly but steadily to nearly 9,000 people. Today, Socorro’s economy continues to be fueled by technology-based enterprises. The Very Large Array Radio Telescope, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology and White Sands Missile Range attract scientists and engineers from across the globe. Agricultural and commercial businesses continue to bolster growth, and artists and musicians are attracted to Socorro’s southwestern charms.

The history of this unique place demonstrates that Socorro has an ability to adapt to new enterprises. Socorro readily welcomes newcomers.

Culture

Architecture

Socorro is a gateway to the legends of the Southwest. Historic Fort Craig and the ghost towns of the area are of special interest to visitors. The phenomenal growth of the 1880s diminished when the mines were exhausted. Small towns for which Socorro was the mercantile center dwindled, some to extinction. Kelly, near the town of Magdalena, is a well-known ghost town that experienced such hard times.

Much of Socorro's historic district is within walking distance of the Plaza. The town plaza was traditionally the commercial, religious and military center. Set on the course of a major water spring, it began as an army field in the mid 19th century. For an unknown reason, the church and plaza were atypically set apart from each other. Kittrel Park, now simply "The Plaza," was named after a local dentist, the first to plan and care for the grounds. Now the site is the location of numerous community events.

The walking tour brings the Socorro of yesterday into the present. The early Spanish influence is seen in the San Miguel Mission and nearby buildings. The church was built between 1615 and 1626. Numerous buildings built during the boom years of the late 19th century can be viewed on the tour. Although remodeled in the 1930s, the Hilton Drugstore is reminiscent of the long history of entrepreneurship in Socorro. The Garcia Opera House, built as a theater and community center, is where dances and sporting events were held.

The Val Verde Hotel, built in 1919, served the influx of tourists who traveled to Socorro via railroad and automobile. Many homes in Socorro display the development of Southwestern architecture, including Pueblo/Spanish architecture with adobe walls almost two feet thick, California Mission style popular in the early 20th century and other Territorial and Eastern architecture.

Science and Technology

One of radio astronomy's most impressive technological achievements can be observed at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO) west of Socorro. The observatory features the Very Large Array (VLA) Radio Telescope, a series of 27 movable dish-shaped antennas that take radio photographs of the sky. The telescope is sensitive to the faint radio emissions of celestial objects within and beyond the Milky Way.

The Mineral Museum of the New Mexico Bureau of Mines and Mineral Resources houses the largest mineral collection in the state. More than 10,000 specimens can be viewed.

Native American Culture

Northwest of Socorro, the reservation of the Alamo Chapter of the Navajo Nation is open throughout the year to visitors interested in experiencing a more traditional way of life. Indian Days is an annual event sponsored by the 1400 Navajos living on the land. Traditional dances and dress, along with special foods and crafts illustrate the living culture of the Navajo people.

Arts and Music

New Mexico Tech's Performing Arts Series brings a variety of national touring groups to Macey Center during the school year. The Socorro Community Theater performs at the Garcia Opera House. The art of Socorro is diverse. Local artists have gallery exhibitions as well as studio events. Local musicians sing and play at various local venues.

Points of Interest

To get a glimpse of Socorro's culture, some local points of interest include the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, the Very Large Array, Trinity Site at White Sands Missile Range, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, the Quebradas Region, San Lorenzo Canyon, Box Canyon, Cibola National Forest, the San Miguel Mission, and the Historic Walking Tour, Fort Craig, Escondida Lake Park and El Camino Real International Heritage Center.

Directory: Emergency/Government/Utilities

Emergency – 911

Fire Department, 202 Fisher Avenue (575) 835-3639

Hospital

Socorro General Hospital, 1202 Highway 60 West (575) 835-1140

Law Enforcement

New Mexico State Police..... (575) 835-0741

Socorro County Sheriff..... (575) 835-0941

Socorro Police Department, 404 Park Street (575) 835-1883

Poison Control..... (800) 222-1222

Government

City of Socorro, 111 School of Mines Road (575) 835-0240

Socorro County Manager's Office, 106 Center Street (575) 835-0589

NM State Department of Motor Vehicles, 102 South 6th Street..... (575) 835-0768

Socorro County Chamber of Commerce, 101 Plaza..... (575) 835-0424

Utilities

Cable

Comcast of Socorro, 223 Fisher Avenue (575) 835-2424

Electricity/Satellite

Socorro Electric Cooperative, 215 Manzanares Ave. East (575) 835-0560

Gas/Sewer/Trash/Water

City of Socorro, 111 School of Mines Road..... (575) 835-0240

Telephone

Qwest.....(800) 244-1111

Communications

Newspapers

El Defensor Chieftain, www.dchieftain.com..... (575) 835-0520

Mountain Mail, <http://mountainmail.blogspot.com>..... (575) 838-5555

Radio

KUFR Radio (866) 359-3147

Public Transportation

Socorro Taxi..... (575) 835-4276

Socorro Transportation..... (575) 835-1501

Directory – Education

Education

Socorro Consolidated Schools, Superintendent’s Office	(575) 835-0300
Alamo Navajo	(575) 854-2635
Magdalena Municipal	(575) 854-2241

Preschools

Socorro Head Start	(575) 835-0008
Socorro Even Start	(575) 835-8949
Socorro Cooperative Nursery School	(575) 835-1336

Elementary, Charter and Middle Schools

Cottonwood Valley Charter, Socorro (Grades K-8)	(575) 838-2026
Midway Elementary, Lemitar (Grades K-5)	(575) 835-1098
Parkview Elementary, Socorro (Grades K-3)	(575) 835-1086
San Antonio Elementary, San Antonio (K-5)	(575) 835-1758
Sarracino Middle School, Socorro (Grades 6-8)	(575) 835-0283
Zimmerly, Socorro (Grades 4-5)	(575) 835-1436

High Schools

Socorro High School, Socorro (Grades 9-12)	(575) 835-0700
--------------------------------------------------	----------------

Higher Education

New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology (NM Tech)	(575) 835-5011
New Mexico Tech Distance Education/Community College	(575) 835-5511

Preschool Childcare

Alberta House Preschool	(575) 838-0800
MidWest Cap Socorro Headstart	(575) 835-0008
NM Tech Children’s Center	(575) 835-5240
Socorro Cooperative Nursery School	(575) 835-1336

Libraries

Magdalena Public Library 108 North Main Street, Magdalena	(575) 854-2361
New Mexico Tech Library 801 Leroy Place, Socorro	(575) 835-5614
Socorro Public Library 401 Park Street, Socorro	(575) 835-1114

Directory – Health and Well-Being

Medical

Alamo Navajo Health Center.....	(575) 854-2626
Bhasker Medical Clinic.....	(575) 835-2940
Magdalena Area Medical Center	(575) 854-3161
Presbyterian Medical Group, Podiatry.....	(575) 835-8760
Presbyterian Medical Group, Surgery.....	(575) 835-8364
Socorro General Medical Group.....	(575) 838-4690
Socorro General Hospital.....	(575) 835-1140
Socorro Health Center Clinic (PMS)	(575) 835-4444

Chiropractic

Goforth Chiropractic, LLC	(575) 835-9288
---------------------------------	----------------

Dental

Duane H. Beers, DMD.....	(575) 835-3662
Ginger Bratzel, DDS Lic.....	(575) 835-1851
Marian T. Lucero, DDS.....	(575) 835-2342
Bonner Oates, DDS.....	(575) 835-1623

Eye

Eye Associates of NM.....	(575) 835-2980
Steven C. Woodard	(575) 835-2020

Long-Term Care

Good Samaritan Society- Socorro, Nursing Home.....	(575) 835-2724
Home Health Care and Hospice.....	(575) 835-8343

Counseling and Mental Health

Socorro Mental Health.....	(575) 835-2444
Heritage Program, Seniors.....	(575) 835-8780
Socorro Adult Activities Center	(575) 835-2420

Other Resources

Casa Alegre	(575) 835-8367
Children, Youth and Families.....	(575) 835-2716
Community Action Program	(575) 835-0899
Department of Labor.....	(575) 835-0067
Department Human Services	(575) 835-0342
Disabled American Veterans	(575) 835-0843
El Puente del Socorro Domestic Violence Services.....	(575) 835-0928
Housing Authority.....	(575) 835-0196
Maternal Child Health.....	(575) 835-8709
Puerto Seguro Day Shelter.....	(575) 835-2895
Public Health Office.....	(575) 835-0971
Senior Citizen Center.....	(575) 835-2119
Social Security Administration	(800) 772-1213
Storehouse Food Pantry	(575) 517-7194
Veteran’s Administration Clinic.....	(505) 265-1711
Women, Infants and Children	(575) 835-0977

Directory – Religion and Spirituality

Apostolic Grace United, 602 California, Socorro.....	(505) 864-1444
Church of Champions, 603 California, Socorro	(575) 838-3803
Calvary Chapel, 802 Mitchell Ave., Socorro	(575) 312-2976
Chihuahua Bible Chapel, 1 Carlos Martinez Road, Veguita.....	(505) 861-0008
Church of Christ, 1001 El Camino Real,	(575) 835-2272
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1112 El Camino Real, Socorro.....	(575) 835-0570
Church on the Rock, 510 California, Socorro.....	(575) 835-2769
El Buen Pastor Church, Park Street, Socorro	(575) 835-2172
El Centro Bautista Amisted, Socorro	(575) 835-3251
Epiphany Episcopal Church, 908 Leroy Place, Socorro.....	(575) 835-1818
Family Christian Center, Highway 60 & Fowler, Socorro	(575) 835-0185
Family Fellowship Church, Edgington Lane, Socorro	(575) 418-9801
First Assembly of God, Rt.1 Box 156, Rd. 5 ABC, Polvadera	(575) 835-3817
First Baptist Church, 203 Spring Street, Socorro	(575) 835-0041
First Baptist Church of Magdalena, Kelly Road at Poplar, Magdalena.....	(575) 854-2389
First Presbyterian Church, 304 McCutcheon Avenue, Socorro	(575) 835-0942
Gospel of Hope Holiness Mission, 706 10 th Street, Magdalena	(575) 854-2924
Harwood United Methodist Church, 301 Garfield, Socorro	(575) 418-1819
Hope Lutheran Church, 908 Leroy Place, Socorro.....	(708) 408-1569
Jehovah’s Witness, 922 Ake Avenue, Socorro	(575) 838-2049
Magdalena Community Church, Main Street at 4 th , Magdalena.....	(575) 854-2364
Potter’s House, 911A North California St.....	(575) 418-0476
San Miguel Catholic Church, 403 El Camino Real, Socorro	(575) 835-2891
Society of Friends (Quaker), 94 Hope Farm Road, Socorro.....	(575) 835-0013
Socorro Baptist Temple, 1301 South Fairgrounds Road #2, Socorro	(575) 835-3306
Socorro Unitarian Universalists, 908 Leroy Place, Socorro	(575) 838-7113
Socorro Church of Christ, 1001 El Camino Real , Socorro.....	(575) 835-2272
Socorro Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 218 Garfield, Socorro	(575) 440-9587
St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church, 3 rd and Elm Street, Magdalena (San Miguel).....	(575) 835-2891
St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, 1000 Goad, Socorro	(575) 835-1372
The Lighthouse Church, 16A Box 10 Calle de Lemitar, Lemitar.....	(575) 835-0393
Trinity Christian Fellowship, 1403 El Camino Real, Socorro	(575) 418-9334