

Manager's View
A monthly e-mail message from
County Manager Tom Zdunek

"Grade A"
February 2013

When we were in school, all our parents wanted us to get good grades—straight A's if possible. If you're like me, that wasn't always possible. Funny how some things in life don't change. Getting straight A's is still the gold standard, but in this case, it also saves money.

In preparation for our sale of \$17.8 million in bonds to fund a variety of road and other infrastructure projects, the county reached out to the three major bond rating agencies to provide a rating for this bond issuance. All three agencies gave the county an AAA rating—the highest possible rating. I would like to thank all of the county staff and elected officials who helped prepare and present our information to the rating agencies.

So what does an AAA bond rating mean? It's kind of like having a high credit score. It means you are able to borrow money at lower rates because your financial health and track record indicate a very strong likelihood that you will repay what you borrowed. It's no different for the county. A high bond rating means the rating agencies agree that Bernalillo County has the demonstrated ability to repay the people who purchase our bonds with little chance of defaulting. Because of the low risk, the county will pay a low interest rate of only 2.28% over the 15-year repayment period to the purchasers of the bonds sold this week.

As county manager, I am proud of all the work that each of you do that helps contribute to our financial stewardship of public funds. It is our duty to be wise with the tax dollars we use and make sure we are getting good value for the public we serve. A strong bond rating reinforces for ourselves the fact that we are being prudent in our use of tax dollars and demonstrates to the public that outside agencies also see it that way. Plus it saves the public money, and that's something of which we can all be proud.