

The Pueblo of Jemez has a long history, and its people have overcome many challenges to preserve their culture over hundreds of years, challenges which continue to this day. Traditionally pronounce 'He-mish', the Pueblo of Jemez traces its roots back to the late 13th century when ancestors migrated to the Canon de Sand Diego region. By the time of European contact in 1541, the Jemez Nation was one of the largest and most powerful of the puebloan cultures. However, from an estimated population of 30,000, the Jemez people were soon decimated by warfare and diseases introduced by the Europeans. The Towa-speaking people of the Pueblo of Pecos resettled with the people of the Jemez in 1838, bringing diversity to the Pueblo. The two cultures were legally merged by an act of congress in 1936, the Pecos culture still survives to this day at Jemez.

The Jemez people are internationally known for arts and crafts. Pottery such as bowls, seed pots, wedding vases and more are in collections worldwide. In addition, Jemez artisans also create beautiful basketry, embroidery, woven cloths and jewelry. Presently, the Pueblo also welcomes the public to certain events and festivals.

The Pueblo of Jemez is a sovereign nation located approximately 55 miles northwest of Albuquerque, New Mexico. As one of 19 New Mexico pueblos, it is a federally recognized tribe with approximately 3,400 Tribal members, with about 58% of that number living in Jemez. Due to the Tribe's remote location, the Jemez people are faced with appreciable economic and social challenges. There is no public transportation available, and a survey taken in the fall of 2000 found 45% of adults in Jemez did not own a vehicle. At that time, the unemployment rate was 49.2%. The major employer is the Pueblo itself, employing over 200 people. Aside from the Tribal offices and departments, the Pueblo of Jemez also operates a small convenience store.

According to 2000 U.S. Census statistics, the median household income in Jemez Pueblo was \$28, 889, or \$5,244 below the New Mexico median. In addition, Pueblo per-capita income was only \$8,045, far below the state level of \$17,261. About 27% of all families in the Pueblo of Jemez live below the poverty level. The 2000 U.S. Census also indicated that at least one of every two children under the age of five lived in poverty.

The education levels of Jemez Pueblo are also poor, with only 34.8% of all persons having graduated from high school, according to the census data. Only 23.9% of the people have some post-high school training or education without obtaining a degree; 5.7% have a bachelor's degree; and less than 2% have a graduate or professional degree.

Jemez Pueblo has a potential labor force of 1,348 individuals over the age of sixteen, according to the same 2000 U.S. Census. However, only 50.8% were in the labor force, and of those who do work, many must commute to Albuquerque (55 miles) or to Santa Fe (75 miles). The reasons for the high levels of unemployment are endemic to the Pueblo's economic situation, and include: the lack of employable skills; the lack of a high school or GED certificate; the lack of child care; the lack of transportation; and the presence of disabilities such as substance abuse. Many community members have simply given up looking for work because of these barriers. Due to the fact that these individuals are not in the labor force, the actual level of unemployment is estimated to be as high as 66%.

The Pueblo of Jemez is a proud community, cherishing independence and their culture. However, modern economics have diminished the quality of life at Jemez, and Tribal leaders are seeking ways to provide a better lifestyle for its members. By taking advantage of economic opportunities long utilized by other New Mexico tribes, the Pueblo of Jemez hopes to change the lives of the Jemez people for the better.