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**SUBMITTED BY:** Danya Acosta, Mayor Pro Tempore

**MANAGEMENT TEAM REVIEW:** Jose Grijalva, Mayor

**FOCUS AREA:** Economic Development and Tourism

**ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS:** N/A

**SUBJECT:** **RESOLUTION NO. 25-1667**, a Resolution of the Mayor and Council of the City of Douglas, Cochise County, Arizona, **SUPPORTING ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION** and **HERITAGE PRESERVATION** in **RURAL ARIZONA COMMUNITIES** through **TARGETED INVESTMENT, LOCAL EMPOWERMENT,** and **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES.**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

**Advancing Rural Economic Revitalization in Arizona**

**A Unified Call from Douglas and Rural Communities Across the State**

**THE OPPORTUNITY:**

Across rural Arizona, communities like Douglas are rich in history, cultural heritage, and strategic assets—but face persistent economic challenges. Underused historic districts, limited infrastructure investment, and outmigration are common obstacles. At the same time, these regions hold untapped potential in **historic tourism, sustainable manufacturing, border commerce, and regenerative agriculture.**

**THE CHALLENGE:**

Current state programs often overlook the unique needs of rural municipalities. Many lack access to:

- Funding for downtown revitalization and building restoration
- Incentives to attract private sector investment
- Infrastructure to support digital economies
- Tools for adaptive reuse and zoning flexibility
- **Youth are leaving** for cities due to lack of good-paying, future-focused jobs.
- **Speculative real estate investors** buy and hold historic properties, allowing them to deteriorate while local revitalization efforts are stalled.

**BACKGROUND**

**OUR ASK:**

We encourage the League of Arizona Cities and Towns to adopt a **Rural Economic Revitalization Agenda** and advocate for the following state-level actions:

**Key Proposals:**

1. **Rural Historic District Grant Program**  
State-funded grants for facade restoration, adaptive reuse, and public improvements in main street corridors.
2. **Enterprise Zone Expansion & Rural Tax Incentives**  
Tailored support for border commerce, agribusiness, and rural manufacturing to create good jobs and attract private investment.
3. **Broadband & Workforce Infrastructure**  
Partner with the state to close the digital divide and support workforce training aligned with emerging industries.

4. **Policy Toolkits for Local Flexibility**  
Model ordinances and technical support for adaptive reuse, fast-tracking development, and supporting new business growth in older buildings.
5. **Support for Sustainable Agriculture**  
Programs that fund local food systems, agritourism, and innovative farming practices in rural zones.
6. **Youth Retention through Career Pathways**  
Invest in job training and apprenticeships in rural-relevant sectors like ag-tech, clean energy, trades, and tourism.
7. **Tighten Oversight on Neglected Historic Properties**  
Support local governments with policy tools to hold absentee investors accountable for preserving and restoring historic assets.

#### **THE PATH FORWARD:**

We ask the League to:

- Champion this initiative in its legislative agenda
- Facilitate a Rural Economic Resilience track at the Annual Conference
- Coordinate technical assistance and peer learning among rural municipalities

**This is a pivotal moment. With the right support, rural Arizona can preserve its heritage, grow its industries, and build a future of opportunity. Let's do it together.**

#### **DISCUSSION:**

Staff recommends approval.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

TBD.

**Fiscal Year:** 2025

**Amount Requested:**

**Budgeted:** Y / N

**Account (s):**

**“...I MOVE THAT THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 25-1667.”**