

Lundstrom briefs Gallup Council on 2017 NM legislative session

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 31 March 2017 07:21



Agreement OK'd with Youth Center

State Rep. Patricia Lundstrom, D-Gallup, briefed the Gallup City Council March 28 on the happenings at the 2017 session of the New Mexico Legislature. Lundstrom's remarks were for discussion purposes only and were not intended to be voted on.

Lundstrom told council members that the 2017 legislative session, which convened Jan. 17, saw 277 bills approved out of nearly 1,000 that were considered.

"This was an approval rate not seen since 2003," Lundstrom said. "The governor has already acted on a number of bills and has until April 7 to act on the remaining bills or they will be automatically vetoed."

Lundstrom, elected in 2001, said the budget dominated the bulk of discussions at the Roundhouse this time around, but there were equally heated discussions about the minimum

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wage, ethics, public safety and job creation. Lundstrom, who sits on the appropriations and finance committee, said New Mexico's population is flat.

"There are more people moving out than in," she said. "But our death rate is lower than our birth rate. So, overall our population is remaining flat. Every sector of our economy is sluggish, except for our health care industry."

Gallup won't see much, probably nothing, in capital outlay funds due to the statewide budget crunch, Lundstrom informed.

"Gallup, nor any other municipality in the state, most likely won't receive capital outlay funds," she said.

She continued that capital outlay funds would be used in state projects.

For the next fiscal year, the state legislature approved a \$6.1 billion budget package. That amount represents an .04 percent increase over the current state budget.

Lundstrom touched on a few bills that she either sponsored or co-sponsored that have an area impact. A bill on small short term loans, like payday loans or tax return application loans, would have a maximum interest rate of 175 percent over a four-month term and without the possibility of a rollover.

Other relevant bills went through the state legislature, also.

"We approved legislation that allows students to take a 16-month break between high school and college and still be eligible for the lottery scholarship," she said.

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Councilor Fran Palochak thanked Lundstrom for her attentive and intelligent approach at representing Gallup at the state level.

“Thank you very much for what you do,” Palochak said. “You do everything in a very respectful and intelligent way.”

THE GALLUP YOUTH CENTER

The Gallup City Council unanimously approved a management agreement for the Youth Center with the Boys and Girls Club. The matter was presented to council members by City Attorney George Kozeliski.

The current management agreement expires on June 30, 2017. The agreement approved by council members at the Tuesday meeting continues through another two years.

“It was a big savings to simply allow the Boys and Girls Club to manage the facility,” Kozeliski said after the meeting.

Kozeliski noted that there are various entities located in the building that houses the Youth Center. The North Side Senior Center is the primary area and Presbyterian Medical Services runs a clinic inside the edifice, too.

The Boys and Girls Club and senior Center are in the building as well. The Boys and Girls Club manages the Youth Center and is paid by the city to do so.

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