



Tourism, marketing main point of trip

Officials from the city of Gallup and the Gallup-McKinley County Chamber of Commerce travelled to Washington, D.C., earlier this month to attend the annual IPW — known within the tourism industry as the International Pow Wow.

The event, which was locally attended by Bill Lee, executive director at the chamber, and Jennifer Lazarz, Gallup tourism and marketing director, is billed as the largest tourism trade show in North America. It is the travel industry's premier international marketplace and the largest generator of travel to the United States.

The trip went from June 4 through June 7 for Lee and Lazarz. The chamber has a long-standing professional agreement with the city for tourism and marketing promotion.

“It has been in existence for many years and focuses on bringing international tour groups and travelers to the United States,” Lee said. “We went as part of a coalition through the New Mexico Hospitality Association. We shared a large booth with Las Cruces, the Space Port, Visit Albuquerque and Santa Fe. We (Gallup) had more than 30 appointments scheduled with various tour groups and travel agencies from China, japan, Germany, Australia, France, Italy, Taiwan and India. In our meetings, we highlighted Gallup as a destination for travelers and tour groups — discussing the various tourism assets and events that would be worthwhile for them to extend their stays in Gallup,” Lee said.

Out of the 30 appointments, “We feel we will find success with the groups. With more than 20 groups responding positively that they wish to include us as a destination,” Lee said.

Lee said many of the bookings will not come until 2018 and 2019 since “they (interested parties) are booking these trips far in advance.

“Jennifer and I are working on building tourism itineraries from one to four days which will fit the various needs of the bus tours and individual foreign in-bound travelers,” Lee said.

“It was without a doubt a major tourism and marketing venture,” Lazarz said. “We spoke with a lot of different people from a lot of different places.”

Lee and Lazarz estimated the cost of the trip to be around $10,000, with the overall cost split between the city, the chamber and the other participating cities which shared the informational booth at the Washington Convention Center.

For Lee the Washington, D.C., tourism and marketing jaunt was the culmination of two consecutive tourism ventures in a short amount of time. A couple of weeks prior, Lee attended the New Mexico Governor’s Conference on tourism function in Santa Fe.

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