

## Contaminants delay Gallup Skate Park

Written by By Deswood Tome Sun Correspondent  
Tuesday, 28 November 2017 16:40

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The completion date for the construction of the north side Gallup Skate Park has been pushed back to next summer, due to a condition found in the soil from historic coal train activity.

The new park is east of the Gallup Cultural Center.

“They found a coal seam that is not suitable for foundation,” Gallup Public Works Executive Director Stanley Henderson said. “It’s from historic train activity — old fashioned steamed shovel trains.”

The Gallup Cultural Center is the site of the historic train depot built in 1918.

“It’s where the loading and unloading of passengers we believe where they serviced the engines and cleaned out the burner boxes,” Henderson said.

Creosote was found in the soil, a contaminate the U.S. EPA classifies as a “probable human carcinogen” that affects the skin and liver.

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Other contaminants found were benzene and hydrocarbons. Benzene is a chemical the Center for Disease Control lists as cancer causing.

More than 3,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil were removed, which required the city to treat it as a coal environmental mitigation matter.

The city denied that a sinkhole was found on the property, as some sources have claimed.

“There is no sink hole,” Henderson said. “The coal stream is seven to eight foot deep.”

Henderson appeared before the City Council in July to report on the findings that delayed the project.

“We were due to finish the project this year,” Henderson said. “We will close the project for the winter and start next March or April.” The Public Works Department suspends projects involving the pouring of concrete during winter months.

The project’s original cost was \$911,000. \$44,000 of that cost was matched through a capital outlay fund by Rep. Patricia Lundstrom (D-9).

The delay in the project caused a carry over of construction cost into fiscal year 2018.

The Gallup City Council approved an additional \$250,000 to excavate the soil and to put in a geo-pier. A geo-pier is a patented foundation solution used for replacements of foundation.

“It drives in the aggregate into the ground, compacts the soil and minimizes the disturbances,”

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Henderson said.

The new site for the skate park is replacing the skate park that was demolished in Chihuahuita, an older part of the city. The now demolished skate park site is being prepared for the construction of the new Lincoln elementary school.

The new skate park will be entirely concrete with half pipe skating features.

By Deswood Tome

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