

Funding for billboards, brochures approved at City Council meeting

The Gallup City Council is looking to make the city a destination this summer, and started off their April 24 regular meeting by approving the use of lodgers' tax funds to market events for Memorial Day and the Fourth of July.

Overall, the investment of marketing dollars by the city dominated discussions.

The commissioners looked at approvals for the FY19 Chamber of Commerce contracts, which cover funding for summer nightly Indian dancing along with advertising and promotion for other events. The contracts asked for $185,000 in total.

Included in the requests was the Manuelito Children's Home, which sought $5,000 for their Memorial Day 5K Fun Run, an annual fundraising activity.

Jennifer Lazarz, city marketing director, said there had been a discrepancy in the numbers and that marketing for the event would cost $65,000 and not $60,000.

Lazarz went on to highlight the success of Gallup's tourism publications and travel guides. By spreading the word about the city, Lazarz hopes to bring in more visitors.

"Our 'Gallup Visitor's Guide' saw some really nice press this week at the International Tourism Conference," Lazarz said. "They sent out a weekly blast this week featuring visitor's guides from across the country and ours was fifth."

Bill Lee, a commissioner for McKinley County, reported alongside Lazarz and said they both have been using social media to bring more attention to Gallup.

Lee said other advertising efforts include television commercials, finalizing the city marketing contract, and attendance at an upcoming governor's conference.

"We're looking to score a huge media packet again," Lee said, in reference to the city's successful $8,000 negotiation with a San Diego firm to provide $30,000 worth of marketing to the city. "We had $6,000 left on the nightly dancing contract and we spent that on new brochures for distribution statewide."

Lazarz said other marketing ideas for the city include "Good Morning America" billboard advertisements in Times Square, and the new visitor's guide.

"I expect greater things to come," she said.

The councilors commended the excellent working relationship between Lee and Lazarz.

"Kudos to you two," Councilor Yogash Kumar said. "Sometimes it's difficult to put two people together from other areas of the community. Usually, there's friction."

Councilor Linda Garcia agreed and said the pair's complimentary style was like yin and yang.

"I see it too," she said.

The "Gallup Real True" Facebook page has been another successful marketing campaign for the city. Currently, the page boasts 7,202 likes with 7,233 people following.

"We're finding out what makes things click with people," Lazarz said of the page.

Councilor Fran Palochak was excited with the potential of the Facebook page.

"It's four different platforms. (We) have to be on the cutting edge. Explore those arenas, we have to market to the younger folks. It's just beautiful," Palochak said.

Lee said the city is going to have about 100 nights of dancing this summer, equating to about 25,000 visitors within that timeframe.

The council motioned to approve funding for the marketing campaigns and it passed by unanimous vote.

By Rick Abasta
For the Sun