

McKinley County infrastructure improvement projects presented

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
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Twenty-six make the list

Plans for McKinley County infrastructure for 2021-2025 were the subject of the Aug. 20 meeting, with Evan Williams addressing the Board of Commissioners. Williams, of the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, has been working with McKinley County staff on the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan for several months.

The plan was last brought before the Board of Commissioners at their July 30 meeting.

“The State of New Mexico wants to know what infrastructure and facilities are out there, and get a number [cost] attached to it,” Williams said July 30.

At that time, Williams said the funding sources need to meet a number of requirements through the grant writing process, otherwise McKinley County projects would not be prioritized for funding.

The plan provided by Williams at the Aug. 20 meeting listed up to 26 projects for the coming

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fiscal years, which is a decrease from last year's count of 40 projects.

"We did try to focus the list down to the real needs and priorities of McKinley County," Williams said.

The 14 projects missing from last year's list were either funded, or not deemed to be priorities, Williams added.

Projects on the plan fit into categories including facilities, transportation, water supply, vehicles, and equipment.

These projects include improvements to facilities such as the county detention center and Thoreau Community Center; improvements to Manuelito Canyon Bridge and Road as well as numerous other county bridges and roads; and improvements to water systems in areas such as Williams Acres and Catalpa Hills.

Williams said the entity that owns each of these project assets is the one advocating for those assets to be a priority project.

"The county has a number of things we have to look at, like making sure there's the right of way," Williams said, explaining one of the factors in determining project priorities.

Not having right of way is why NWNMCG deactivated a number of projects in the last year, he added.

This is in addition to a number of new priorities popping up, such as the construction of energy-efficient buildings and a large number of bridge projects.

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“We have the plans in place, we just need money for them,” Williams said.

The 26 priority projects Williams laid out to the Board of Commissioners total about \$150 million. The plan is to focus on five of the projects each year, with the first two years being used for the highest priorities identified by the county.

The Board of Commissioners approved the plan with a 3-0 vote.

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