

Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation discusses fiscal goals

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
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The Gallup City Council heard a presentation from the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation during the Sept. 10 regular meeting about the previous fiscal year.

Tommy Haws, president of the GGEDC Board of Directors, said during the presentation the creation of economic base jobs is the focus for the upcoming fiscal year.

One highlight from the past fiscal year is the creation of a nitrile glove factory within McKinley County. The factory, located east of Gallup at 309 E. Hwy. 66, was designated by Haws as a \$49 million investment that will create about 350 jobs.

Haws said the factory is slated to begin operations in October.

Another was GGEDC winning the Foreign Direct Investment Qualified Community Certification by Trans-Atlantic Business Council. During an awards ceremony in July, GGEDC Executive Director Patricia Lundstrom said this meant TBIC would begin marketing Gallup-McKinley County to European manufacturing firms.

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Lundstrom was present at the Sept. 10 meeting and specified goals for GGEDC moving forward. They include recruitment, business expansion and retention, along with the creation of a workforce development program.

“This is all about helping to improve the economic base [of Gallup and McKinley County],” Lundstrom said. “At the end of the day, workforce development is economic development. We’re going to make a big push for the next year.”

To that end, Haws said they selected Johnny Gonzalez as their workforce development manager. He served as project manager for 10 years in Biloxi, Miss.

“The area is hungry for workforce development,” Gonzalez said. “The potential to succeed is pretty huge.”

Gonzalez said the goal is to create a group of employers that will be innovative and bring ideas and methods to Gallup businesses that are new to the area and will grab the attention of nearby communities and inspire them to follow their lead.

“They’ll have to come to Gallup to see how it’s done,” Gonzalez said.

Kent Wilson, GGEDC board member, said the policy on running the workforce was compiled in under three months. The policy will address work ethics and skill levels with various tools and types of equipment.

Getting more people better prepared for jobs will be a community-wide effort, he added.

“We can work with the employer to get [new hires] employed as soon as possible and get the required certificate for the job,” Wilson said.

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Haws said he was very excited about the opportunities going forward and thanked the city council for its support.

“[GGEDC] wouldn’t exist if not for you,” Haws said. “The support from the council shows they are serious about growth in Gallup.”

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