

City Council gives kind words for Community Cleanup

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While the agenda was light on new business for the Gallup City Council during the Oct. 13 meeting, the air was full of enthusiasm.

Thanks were given to the staff of the city's Solid Waste Department and community members who participated in the 10th Annual Community Cleanup, which began in July and finished on Oct. 3.

"The staff and community did a tremendous job, especially with COVID being here," Dist. 1 Councilor Linda Garcia said. "The people over there went above and beyond [with the cleanup], so I want to thank them."

Garcia also thanked the staff at the Wastewater Plant for their efforts, particularly during the ongoing pandemic. She cited a recent water break on Aztec Avenue and how some staff worked overnight to get the problem sorted out.

"I just want to say they do an extraordinary job out there with what they have," she said. "I have so much respect for them and I want every city department to know we greatly respect and admire what they are doing and that they are all valuable to their city councilors."

Other councilors thanked the cleanup staff for their efforts.

"It's a wonderful job the [Solid Waste Department] staff does, and I noticed that we upped the tonnage [of waste] we brought in this year," Dist. 2 Councilor Michael Schaaf said. "I want to thank them for the fantastic job they do, along with the citizens of Gallup for cleaning up their neighborhoods as well."

Specifically, City Manager Maryann Ustick said the city went from picking up 343 tons in 2019 to 487 tons in 2020. Ustick added the city's Public Works and Parks departments are also essential to getting the project done, which makes it a team effort.

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Ustick provided other information to the *Sun* about the previous two Community Cleanups. In 2019 the city collected \$14,189 in tipping fees and then collected \$20,459 in 2020. The city collected 17 tons of metal in 2019 and 44 tons in 2020. Then in 2019 the city paid about \$1,070 in metal refunds, and another \$1,771 in 2020.

Dist. 3 Councilor Yogash Kumar said the pandemic will likely impact the city's financial status for the upcoming year, but the completion of the cleanup shows what can happen when everyone works toward a common goal.

"It really works wonders when the city comes together and they're taking out the trash from their yards and other areas," Kumar said. "It's one way to keep the city clean. And since people are home more now because of COVID, they have more time on their hands, so it's good to be able to provide these services to the community."

Mayor Louie Bonaguidi also thanked Solid Waste Superintendent Adrian Marrufo and his staff for their cleanup efforts in the Mossman neighborhood.

"During those two days, it looked like the biggest garage sale in the world. I've never seen so many vacuum cleaners," he said. "But the people Adrian [Marrufo] has employed, they do a tremendous job. I saw them early in the morning and late in the evening working. It has to be one of the toughest projects they can take on, and they did a tremendous job with it."

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