

GGEDC working toward airport master plan

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
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Plans to utilize the Gallup Municipal Airport more often as a transport hub came up during the Gallup City Council's Nov. 10 meeting.

The Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation worked with the City of Gallup to submit an application for an Economic Development Administration grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce on behalf of the city to develop an airport master plan for the Gallup Municipal Airport and to develop an self-governing vehicle plan.

The city and GGEDC were awarded the grant for \$600,000. Along with the city's match of \$150,000, GGEDC has \$750,000 to devote to the project.

CB Strain, planning and development director for the City of Gallup, said during the meeting the city is aiming to get air service back at the airport and also develop the independent vehicle plan.

GGEDC Executive Director Patricia Lundstrom said the organization is always looking to utilize transportation assets and build new industry sectors.

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“The most important local asset we have in Gallup is transportation infrastructure,” Lundstrom said. “By working closely with the city on the council grant, we want to take advantage of the COVID CARES EDA [Economic Development Administration] funds that are available.”

The additional funds will allow the city to meet several goals it has had for a while, including the airport plan and transportation master plan.

“We saw the opportunity for a new industry sector with autonomous [vehicle] development, which is about R&D,” Lundstrom said. “If transportation testing happens by a company, their research and development sectors will follow.”

Gallup was recently identified by the State of New Mexico as a potential transportation hub for automated vehicle technology testing.

“It’s going to be a lift for the city,” Lundstrom said. “It’s going to be a learning experience, but we have a good partnership and guidance with EDA and city staff.”

Lundstrom said the next step is to go through the transportation plans and make sure everything is in order and can proceed.

“We know what the plan looks like at the end of the day, but now we need to get it on paper,” Lundstrom said.

The motion to accept the grant and a memorandum of understanding between the city and GGEDC to develop the two transportation plans was approved with a 5-0 vote.

By Cody Begaye
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