

Keep 'em coming

Written by By Holly J. Wagner Sun Correspondent
Friday, 08 July 2022 07:49



City approves funding for ongoing tourism promotion

Gallup's primary guardians of tourism are funded for another year, after the city council passed a raft of tourism-related measures that will keep the Gallup-McKinley County Chamber of Commerce, Gallup Cultural Center and airport services humming.

Tourism is big business for Gallup, accounting for about a third of the area's above-ground economy, according to Chamber Executive Director Bill Lee. That estimate probably falls short because of the money that changes hands in the underground artisan economy.

The council approved a \$120,000 contract with the Chamber to keep the Visitor Information Center open year-round (\$75,000); and print a visitors guide for 2022 (\$30,000). Funding also covers \$15,000 in advertising and promotion services to attract visitors and increase tourism. The contract runs from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

The Gallup Cultural Center has undergone a thorough refresh, and the council approved a \$60,000 contract with the Southwest Indian Foundation to continue running the center.

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Services will include museum curation and exhibit expansion; cultural programming and a youth program focused on live demonstrations of painting, weaving and other artisan showcases; development of new group tour programming; and strategic planning.

Notably absent from these contracts is the Nightly Indian Dance program next summer. The Cultural Center contract includes dances at 7 pm Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays through July this year, but hiring and managing dance groups next year will be subject to a separate contract and council approval.

In other tourism-related actions, the Council:

Accepted \$7,200 reimbursement from the New Mexico Tourism Department to Gallup's Tourism & Marketing Department. The money is part of a cooperative marketing grant that pays two-thirds of the cost for various activities, including crowdsourced photo and video management; a 12-month social content package; a video and still photo shoot; Google search engine management; and paid advertising to boost a traveler's chances of discovering Gallup on Google. The city department also received a like match for advertising in *Route Magazine*.

Approved a Fixed Base Operator vendor to operate and maintain the terminal at Gallup Municipal Airport. The new contract will pay the city a percentage of profits from fueling and other services and will be finalized before Alliance Air begins daily passenger air service to and from Phoenix, Ariz., Aug. 1.

Appointed Councilor Linda Garcia, Dist.1, and Joseph Sanchez, owner of Red Rock Insurance Agency, to the Gallup Business Improvement District Board. The board had three vacancies after the terms of Steve Gurley and James Rich expired at the end of last year. That leaves one open seat, and Gurley may rejoin the panel to fill it.

Approved a request from the BID to close some streets and parking lots for the Freedom Festival event at the end of July; and a Special Dispenser's permit for a beer garden at the Courthouse Square July 30.

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