

McKinley County receives two Risk Awareness Program awards

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Sun Correspondent
Friday, 08 July 2022 07:49



McKinley County was one of three counties recognized with a 2022 Risk Awareness Program Award during the 2022 New Mexico Counties 85th Annual Conference on June 16 in Albuquerque.

The RAP is a workplace risk control educational program that aims to reduce the frequency and severity of county claims through better risk awareness and safety practices.

McKinley County has been participating in the program for 14 years now. The county won an award acknowledging this achievement, along with another that celebrated the fact that the county's auto claims have gone down by 24%.

The program helps train county employees on what to do in case of an emergency.

"It's just good stuff to keep fresh in the mind of what we do policy-wise, this is best practices, this is what we do so we don't have injuries, so we don't have liabilities," the county's Risk Manager Andrew Rodriguez said in an interview with the *Sun*.

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“It covers issues that arise in workers’ comp, so slips, trips, and falls, and all those things. It covers our general liability issues,” the county’s attorney Doug Decker explained.

Rodriguez noted that a lot of the topics covered by RAP can help the county employees outside of work as well.

“The good thing with the RAP program is that a lot of this stuff is not just work-related things,” Rodriguez said. “If they tell you about driving safely in the ice, that’s something you can take outside of work as well as inside work. We want our employees to be safe all the time.”

Decker said he’s come to appreciate the ladder safety lesson that is a part of RAP.

“The one I appreciate every year is ladder safety. Now you may be thinking ‘you’re an attorney, you’re never going to go on a ladder at work,’ that is true, but I do go on a ladder at home, and after years of doing this I’ve seen that my ladder safety at home is much better,” Decker said.

The county departments review different material at different times, but it’s all about making sure the employees are as safe as possible.

“We want to establish a safety culture,” Decker said. “Before we started RAP we would notice something that wasn’t quite right, but we wouldn’t tell anybody, and RAP teaches us ‘hey, say something.’”

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