

Landavazo reflects on past, points to current issues

Written by By Melinda Russell Sun Correspondent
Thursday, 30 April 2015 11:30



Husband, father and grandfather first, now City Councilor, Allan Landavazo took time to raise his family before he decided to run for city office. Landavazo has deep ties to Gallup. He was born and raised here, graduating from Gallup High School. He has a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and has been the general manager of Castle Furniture for 15 years.

Landavazo volunteered as a soccer coach and when his children attended Rehoboth Christian School, and he helped with fundraising for choir trips and other school needs.

“I was involved with every aspect of their school life.”

Once his children left home, and after long consideration, he decided to run for office. He said his decision to run was spiritually based.

“If God wants me to serve on council then that’s what he will choose for me,” he said “If he’s got something else in store, then that’s what he has in store for me.”

Eight years ago, Landavazo began his first term as district 2 city councilor.

Infrastructure

Landavazo explained, a lot of the infrastructure in Gallup is over 100 years old. A five year plan is being developed to ensure projects do not overlap wasting money and time. During the past

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four years over \$1 million has been spent on road improvements.

The sewer treatment facility is under new management where new methods of treatment are being used to begin the process of reducing the sewage smell. Chemical injections at strategic points in town, transferring dried sludge to other waste disposal sites and possible upgrades to the plant are being considered as solutions to the problem.

Projects completed

The work accomplished at the Sports Complex was a multi-million dollar project. The fields were changed from grass to turf saving the city much valued water. The holding pond was drained and filled in.

About \$3 to 4 million was spent on Red Rock State Park to rebuild bathrooms, add handicap seating and add a new ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant pathway from the ticket center to the venue.

When asked about the controversy regarding the closure of Harold Runnels Pool, Landavazo explained the pool was never sold out. The cost to run the pool was about \$300,000, of which the city subsidized 95 percent. He said he understands there were people who depended on the pool for their exercise but with the mounting repair bills, it had to be closed. The new aquatic center has time set aside for schools, lap swims, exercise classes and recreational swimming.

A big part of the decision to change the pool into an indoor recreation area was the fact that our community is “infected by diabetes”, Landavazo said. The new facility offers an indoor soccer field, walking track, weights, and a shower.

“A healthy community is a productive community.”

The Annexation of the Rehoboth community was a big project. Rehoboth spent considerable

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funds to upgrade their infrastructure to meet Gallup city codes. Annexation opens up land for housing projects and new businesses.

When asked about the current state of the Gallup Police Department Landavazo responded, "We live in a border town. That creates opportunities but also creates challenges."

He went on to explain that because of the influx of population we see on weekends, we will always have challenges with regard to officer personnel. He added that he is encouraged by the cooperation between the new McKinley County Sheriff Ron Silversmith and the Gallup Police Department.

City officials participated in a summit held at RMCH regarding Gallup's homeless and inebriate population. They discussed needed services including medical and social detoxification and shelters. He said it is estimated there are from 50 to 150 people living on the streets of Gallup. Landavazo wants to see them reintegrated into their families.

Two of the biggest economic challenges facing Gallup are Fire Rock Casino and predatory loan companies. Landavazo explained, the loss of income that goes to these two entities causes increased rates of poverty, increased domestic violence and the breakdown of the family unit.

He told a story of a fixed income family who showed him a tax receipt that reported they lost \$5,000 at Fire Rock Casino in one year. He told another story about one of his employees who took out a title loan on a vehicle and had the vehicle repossessed when she was only two days late on payments. He said New Mexico Rep. Patty Lundstrom, D-NM, has been active with legislation to help lower exorbitant payday lending interest rates, but he is hoping national legislation will be passed to further assist with the problem.

If you have concerns you would like to discuss with Landavazo, you can reach him at (505) 863-1220 or email him at Council2@GallupNM.gov.