

Robert Roche: Infrastructure Investment Key to New Mexico's Growth

Written by By Robert Roche
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Last month, I joined business and community leaders, policymakers, and academic experts in Washington, D.C. for Infrastructure Week. Over and over again, there was bipartisan consensus on the economic opportunity investment in our transportation, energy, and internet infrastructure would create. But we have yet to see meaningful progress. That's a shame, because when we invest in our infrastructure, we invest in our future, we put our state in a more competitive position, and we open the door to job creation in New Mexico. I have learned this from more than 30 years of business and real estate development experience spanning the globe.

Earlier this year, one of my company's subsidiaries, Gallup Land Partners, LLC., (GLP), completed Phase 1 of the Gallup Energy Logistics Park. The Park represents a major initiative to drive economic growth and development in Gallup-McKinley County and provides the space, resources, and infrastructure that companies need to grow along a BNSF-certified national rail network. This project was built in partnership with the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation, and with the support of the City of Gallup, McKinley County, and Governor Martinez's office.

Thanks to both private investment and public support, we've constructed 11,000 feet of new rail lines which will allow energy and other companies to connect to more customers, thereby opening northwestern New Mexico to more growth. Over the past five years, Roche Enterprises, Ltd., the parent company of GLP, has invested more than \$40 million (USD) in the area. Investments like these are critical to our state's competitiveness, making it more attractive to new businesses that will build, relocate, and create jobs here in New Mexico.

The people of New Mexico are ready to roll up their sleeves and get to work. We just need the tools to get the work done. Although New Mexico appears to have a comprehensive incentives

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package for infrastructure and new business development, in practice these programs were not impactful to us. Instead, we had to rely on private investment and hard work.

The Gallup Energy Logistics Park is just one example of a shovel-ready project that is perfectly positioned to create new business opportunities for companies looking to relocate to New Mexico and provide new job opportunities for New Mexico workers. There are similar infrastructure projects ready to move forward all across the country— from new rail tunnels in the Northeast that will help commuters get to work more efficiently and safely, to new transmission lines in the Great Plains that will put cleaner, more affordable electricity on the grid. However, to get these critical projects off the ground, we need not only the capital, but also the political will. Republicans and Democrats must come together, in Santa Fe and in Washington, D.C., to ensure robust funding for infrastructure.

By investing more heavily in our nation's infrastructure, we can regain our competitive edge, improve traffic safety and resiliency, and attract new businesses – all while creating jobs. The success I've seen with the Gallup Energy Logistics Park is the success I want to see across New Mexico and across the country – from Gallup to Carlsbad, from Seattle to New York City. I urge our elected leaders to put American workers and businesses first by making additional investments in our nation's infrastructure.

By Robert Roche

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