

Meet your 'Economic Development' professional

Written by By Tommy Haws President Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation
Friday, 12 May 2017 02:03



Beginning today, professionals across the country are celebrating Economic Development Week. To recognize the occasion, GGEDC and partners in the Gallup Executive Directors Association (GEDA) will present a series of six articles over the course of this week to highlight economic development.

You may say, “How does the work of these organizations really impact me?” It does so by helping to create jobs for our region, thereby increasing our tax base for government services and infrastructure.

When you take your children to school in the morning, that public school benefited from local corporate taxes. And, the company where you work — where did that firm originate? It might just be a company that was recruited to Gallup-McKinley County by the economic development professionals — those men and women we are recognizing this week.

Our community’s prosperity depends upon these diligent, hard-working individuals — for they are the bearers of business growth and job opportunities for our region.

Having said all that, I would like to introduce you to your economic development professional.

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Patty Lundstrom, GGEDC Executive Director, is a Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) recognized by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC).

What is an economic developer’s role?

I see myself as a facilitator between potential opportunities and the communities in which they want to learn about.

At the end of the day, I gauge my successes not by the number of deals I land but by how the communities continue to improve and stabilize the tax base, improving the overall quality life in a community, and enabling the creation of family-sustaining job opportunities.

What is one thing you wish people knew about economic development?

The public typically sees the result of a successful project through an article in the local paper. It’s important they know that many months and sometimes years are put into the projects they read about. It’s also important for them to know that plans for a project often change many times and economic development practitioners wear many hats throughout the process.

What are the daily successes of an economic developer?

The daily successes of an economic developer have little to do with buildings or jobs and everything to do with the evolution of our community—from engaging economic base employers to building excellent roads and utilities.

What do you like about working in economic development?

I enjoy putting the puzzle together: assisting a company with finding the perfect home and the

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best employees; or finding the right developer to build the needed facilities in our community. We connect the dots and find the partners to create a complete community.

What kind of challenges do you help solve as an economic developer?

Talent recruitment and retention is the number one challenge in the economic development field. We must work closely and collaborate with our businesses and educational institutions to further education and training of our population. Furthermore, we must consider not only business growth and development, but also population growth in our communities that will expand our talent reserves.

What do you love most about Gallup-McKinley County?

I am fond of saying, “McKinley County’s best years are in front of it.” Our entire region has the promise of the future and opportunity to alleviate many burdens of the past. I truly believe we can focus on an economic development strategy which gives our residents the best quality of life in New Mexico and the United States. And in that very fact, lies the treasure of enormous business opportunities we can’t even imagine today.

By Tommy Haws

President
Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation