

Rick Murphy receives statewide recognition for his contributions to rural economic development

Written by gallupsun

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Rick Murphy, President of Murphy Construction and Vice President of the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors, is the recipient of NM IDEA's 2024 Dallan Sanders Award. NM IDEA, New Mexico's statewide professional economic developers organization, presents this award each year during its annual meeting "in recognition of a person's dedication and achievements in rural economic development in New Mexico." New Mexico IDEA makes awards to individuals in six categories to encourage, recognize and promote outstanding achievement and professionalism in the field of economic development.

Born and raised in Gallup, Murphy began Murphy Builders, his construction company, in 1987 after obtaining his Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering Technology. The company has an extensive portfolio of private and public sector projects that includes educational, bank, medical, recreational, retail, restaurant, main street improvements, and industrial facilities.

Together with his company, Murphy is committed to contributing to the Greater Gallup Community through significant donations of services and funding, educating and training the local workforce and building exceptional projects. A founding member of the Board of Directors of GGEDC in 2012, Murphy has provided thousands of volunteer service hours to helping advance economic development throughout McKinley County and the Four Corners Region. He has served as Vice President of the GGEDC Board of Directors for 10+ years.

"I believe Rick demonstrates and exemplifies the gold standard any agency would welcome in a volunteer. He has been a valuable asset in all aspects of the GGEDC's work," Patty Lundstrom, the executive director of GGEDC, said. "Although he runs a major commercial construction company with a lot of employees, he always takes the time to attend GGEDC's functions and to support our small EDC in multiple ways."

In 2019, Murphy was instrumental in helping GGEDC launch the Greater Gallup Industrial Workforce Program. He worked diligently to recruit local industry leaders to serve on the GGIWP Leadership Team. The Leadership team developed the curriculum and policies, identified suitable training facilities, built public-private partnerships that provided additional funding and resources to the program, and oversaw a national search to hire a Master Tradesman to head up the three-year EDA-funded pilot project. Transitioned last year to the Southwest Indian Foundation, GGIWP continues providing local residents with the entry-level trades skills local industries require.

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In 2023, the International Economic Development Council awarded GGEDC a 2023 Excellence in Economic Development Bronze level award for the GGIWP program in the category of “Best Use of Federal Economic Development Resources.” SWIF continues to provide nationally recognized NCCER and OSHA hands-on and classroom construction training to the GGIWP program participants while building homes for low-income members of Navajo Nation.

Last year, SWIF was awarded \$750,000 from the Bi-Partisan Infrastructure Law. The funding will allow SWIF to offer more classes and to expand its services to include training high school juniors and seniors in the trades. The plan is for high school students to receive stackable certifications in the trades together with their diplomas. Many students will be prepared for good-paying local jobs when they graduate. Murphy continues to provide training opportunities and guidance to the program.

“Rick Murphy’s work has profoundly impacted the economic vitality and architectural landscape of Gallup, McKinley County, and the northwest region”, Lundstrom said. “It’s impossible to think what Gallup would look like or that we would be able to attract the world-class companies we do without the critical buildings and infrastructure Murphy Construction has built.”

