

Planning Capital Outlay projects

Written by Story and Photos by Tom Hartsock Sun Correspondent
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Chapter Houses in McKinley County, as well as the Pueblo of Zuni and other interested parties were treated to a six-hour training program on Jan. 8 in the Solarium at Rehoboth McKinley Christian Hospital.

State representatives Patricia Lundstrom and Wonda Johnson introduced the guest speakers, which included: Indian Affairs Cabinet Secretary Kellie Zuni; Infrastructure Manager Laura Vanoni; Capital Outlay Coordinator Marion Salvado; Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments Deputy Director Evan Williams; McKinley County Attorney Doug Decker; and Department Manager Casey Begay of the Navajo Capital Improvement Office.

Each speaker, in the order listed above, furnished the large gathering with ideas, tips, and strategies as they compete for funding in their respective areas.

One of the first things necessary for local governments – from Chapters to Counties – is

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properly filling out the paperwork required when they seek funding from various entities. The precision and correct language may seem to be a menial part of the entire process and is sometimes overlooked, as is the need to aptly describe the appeal in such a way as to enhance the curiosity and interest of the funders.

Williams stated it best by saying the successful people are those who do their homework. It's not enough to just write a plan. Those involved should then work on these projects all 365 days of the year, planning a more comprehensive plan with a future of perhaps 20 years.

"I've been hosting this event for about 10 years," Lundstrom said, who was reached by phone on Jan. 13 in Santa Fe, where she is working on the state budget with the Appropriation Committee, of which she is a member. "The purpose is to provide better info for these smaller entities to allow them to improve their communities.

"McKinley County is the fiscal agent responsible for contracts and grants and ensure the funding source that the project will be finished."

It is important to all making these applications to understand the state legislature and the difference between severance tax bonds, general obligation bonds, and the general fund as sources for the necessary funding.

With all the competition among the different areas and a limited amount of funds available to the legislature, each area must strive to improve their chances in ways that may not seem obvious to most.

And the purpose of this training is to open up ideas and concepts to enable each to gain an edge, no matter how slight.