

McKinley County seeking deputy manager

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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Four area candidates vying for \$74K-plus job

With daily business at McKinley County on the rise, there is a definite need for an additional managerial employee. That's the idea behind the county's recent job search for a deputy county manager.

"We've never had this position here before," McKinley County Attorney Doug Decker said. "We have had some positions that do what an assistant county manager would do. This is a position that needed to be filled."

Decker said a job advertisement closed Sept. 2.

McKinley County Human Resources Director Dezirie Gomez said four people applied for the job: Robert Griego of Gallup, Brian Money of Gallup, Chester Carl of Arizona, and John Chapela of the Pueblo of Zuni.

Griego is a New Mexico State University graduate and the deputy county treasurer for McKinley County.

Money is a graduate of Eastern New Mexico University and is McKinley County's current assistant human resources director under Gomez.

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Carl is currently the executive director of the Hopi Tribal Housing Authority in Polacca, Ariz. He was one of six applicants to apply for the county manager job vacated by Bill Lee and ultimately awarded to Anthony Dimas.

Chapela holds undergraduate and law degrees from the University of New Mexico and is a former Zuni chief tribal judge.

Decker said the deputy county manager job “has probably been needed for some time.”

He noted that the job pays between \$74,000 and \$91,000 per year, depending on qualifications.

When would McKinley County like to see someone fill the position?

“As soon as we find the right qualified person,” Decker said. “We’re hoping that’s going to be sooner rather than later.”

Decker said the job was advertised statewide and on the New Mexico Association of Counties website.

Lee, who resigned from the job in May, said the ball was rolling to put a deputy manager in place before he left the job. Lee worked the job for about 18 months and said the county manager position, which oversees some 300 full-time employees, is busy enough on a daily basis to warrant a second-in-charge role.

Lee won the District 3 county commission seat in June and begins serving in January. He earned \$93,000 annually as county manager, and Dimas, a former Office of Emergency Management director, earns \$100,000 a year.

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“As county manager, your door is open to both county workers and non-county workers all day and everyday,” Lee said. “I advocated for the deputy position when I was there. And I can tell you that a deputy county job is definitely something that is needed.”

By Bernie Dotson
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