

Part 1 of 2: What “Can Be Done”

Written by By Deniece Cornett, Candidate for Village of Milan Treasurer
Friday, 26 August 2016 02:32



During the Town Hall Meeting last week at the Milan Recreation Center, it was apparent that no one had a plan of action on “what to do,” or even a direction on “where to go from here” in order to support community and the economy.

Words like crisis and blame were used to express the lay-offs that have been taking place in Cibola County. For years I have been pondering over these very issues, but prior to now it was the “what if” these things happen.

A number of elected officers for local government and representatives for the New Mexico delegation were present to make statements and hear what the people had to say about the local loss of so many jobs. Each one spoke in turn.

A Grants city councilman was correct in stating that this situation is not a political sort of thing. As I see it, this is a community thing. It takes everyone doing their part in order to get through an emergency or crisis.

Citizen comments spoke of alternatives for the use of the building currently being used by Corrections Corporation of America for the housing of their federal prisoners, which will be shutting down operations at that facility as of Oct. 1 of this year. Another comment suggested building a road up to the top of Mount Taylor in the expectations of promoting tourism.

There were a number of suggestions. There was a suggestion for BIOMASS utilization supporting the Use Green campaign and Buy American law. And, yes, there was a suggestion for the growing of medical cannabis (marijuana) at the facility.

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One suggestion that took a special interest for me was the need to send people to school, here at the local college, to get the educational background and/or technical skills needed to bring in good paying technical jobs.

Educated and skilled labor does not solely attract companies, large or small, to an area. There are many issues to work past that have been in place in this county for decades. What do you do when your educated and skilled decide to move away or take jobs in other towns and cities where pay and advancement is better?

There is also no absolute assurance that outside business will locate to the area. That leaves the most frequently over-looked option, building from within.

Government can do their part and support local businesses. Offer incentives for businesses that hire local residents, preferably those that are unemployed, struggling families, and students. Encourage apprenticeship and cooperative programs where government can partner with local trade professionals that train the next generation.

Government should not be creating one or two \$60,000- \$85,000 annual salary, with full benefits, jobs when that could be used wisely to create 2-5 jobs at \$24,000 annual with benefits. When funding allows for additions to your employee numbers, utilize it. Here is the BIG government secret, actually fill all the positions you request state money for.

Don't hold onto approved position funding to later be used for agenda fulfillment. If government is authorized to use the funding for a position, they should fill that position no less than four weeks after approval. If you have asked the state for the money for the position, you should already have done your HR research and have that position ready to be filled.

To be continued next week.

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