# Gallup awarded $100,000 for Coal Avenue Commons Alley Improvement Project

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**Funds from New Mexico MainStreet will help the city complete downtown upgrades**

New Mexico MainStreet Awards, a program of the New Mexico Economic Development Department, granted Gallup $100,000 to through the Capital Outlay Program Jan. 14. This program awards funds annually to continue its work on the Coal Avenue Commons Alleyways Project which reached the completion stage of Phase I last summer.

Gallup's funds will be to fix drainage and flooding issues and make the alleyways more pedestrian-friendly. Utility lines hanging in the alleys will also be buried.

Since the downtown district in Gallup has faced flooding issues, recent upgrades have focused on renovating the storm drainage system. The Coal Avenue Alley Improvement Project includes similar improvements to reduce flooding in the alleyways.

"This will really help alleviate a lot of that wear and tear on the buildings themselves," Gallup MainStreet Interim Executive Director Michael Bulloch explained.

All of these improvements cost more than the $100,000 Gallup was awarded. Bulloch explained that while the city is funding most of the upgrades itself, the money awarded through the Capital Outlay Program will help bridge the gap in the total cost. Currently, the funds will pay for improvements like the pavers in the alleys, which will cut down on the mud that collects there and make them more pedestrian-friendly overall.

All of these improvements are aimed at the commitment New Mexico MainStreet has to small businesses and the economy.

“A downtown is the greatest community asset in a small town or a rural community, because it attracts visitors, attracts residents, supports small businesses and creates jobs,” New Mexico MainStreet Communications Specialist Jessica Mraz said. “These things support the arts, culture, economy, and entrepreneurship.

“Our main mission is to engage communities to create jobs, and support small businesses.”

Bulloch agrees that a friendly, thriving downtown is a huge asset, especially in a city like Gallup that hosts intertribal ceremonial celebrations and tourists interested in Native American culture and jewelry. The Coal Avenue Commons Alley Improvement Project is the next step in ensuring downtown Gallup is a welcoming place for residents and visitors alike, showcasing some of the best local arts and culture Gallup has to offer.

“As your historic, commercial downtown district goes, so goes the city,” Bulloch said. “If you have a vibrant downtown, then your town is going to be vibrant.”

Funds from the NMMS Capital Outlay Program are used to plan, design, construct, and improve infrastructure in downtown districts across the state.

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