

West Gallup to get new assisted living facility

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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30-room facility is third to be built in area by Ramah Care Services

One of McKinley County's best known assisted living facility builders plans to open a Gallup location at some point in the spring, officials confirmed Wednesday.

Gallup City Planner C.B. Strain said an area along Day Street on the city's west end is slated for such a facility. The matter was not required to go before the Gallup City Council.

"Yes, they have started construction on the building," Strain said. "Everything is proceeding according to the plans of the builder."

Robert Johnston, a Ramah resident and principal with Ramah Care Services, said the \$1.7 million Sunny Day Assisted Living Center should be up and running at some point in June or July. He said the structure was designed by Albuquerque architect Rick Bennett.

Johnston said the single-story building will be managed by a health maintenance organization, saying the company should be taking applications for residents in the next few months. Johnston noted that he and his wife have operated care facilities since 1994.

"It will be managed by an (HMO)," Johnston said. "The spring or summer is when things should

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be ready.”

Johnston noted Ramah Care Services already owns and operates like facilities in Milan and Ramah. Strain said the 9,568-square-foot structure, which sits behind Taco Bell and next to branch offices of the Southwest Indian Foundation, has one floor and a pitched gable roof design. Although full city council approval wasn't required, the project did have to go through the city's planning and zoning department for review and for the proper permits.

“The use of an assisted living facility is a permitted use within this zoning district, so council approvals were not necessary,” Strain said.

As to why Ramah Care Services decided to build in Gallup, Johnston said it's a family-run business and what the company has always been in the business of doing. He said an open house or the new facility would probably be announced at a later date.

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