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April 21, 2021

Richard Reyes, Publisher
Gallup Independent
Attn: Letters to the Editor – for publication on Saturday,
May 8th

Re: National Economic Development Week

May 9th – 15th is being recognized as *Economic Development Week* across the country. Economic Development Week was created by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) in honor of its 95-year anniversary as the largest professional membership organization for economic developers.



The economic development efforts provided by economic developers are being showcased this week nationally. Members of Congress also are highlighting the work of our nation’s economic developers through special resolutions that are appearing in the Congressional Record.

This year’s Economic Development Week in this region is made possible through the collaborative efforts of several organizations that profoundly impact economic development in the area. These include: Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation (GGEDC), Gallup-BID, Gallup-McKinley Chamber of Commerce, Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments (COG), City of Gallup, UNM-Gallup Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Gallup MainStreet Arts & Cultural District, GallupARTS, NM Department of Transportation, and NM Economic Development Department.

To commemorate this momentous occasion for the Gallup-McKinley County region, the Gallup Independent is running a series of articles all week highlighting economic development efforts of several of those organizations. GGEDC will kick off the series on Monday, followed by the COG Tuesday, Gallup-BID Wednesday, SBDC on Friday, and the City of Gallup Marketing & Tourism Department on Saturday. You can also access the articles each day on the GGEDC website (www.gallupedc.com).

In addition, GGEDC will host two panel discussion webinars via Zoom. The first *Zoominar*, titled *Moving Forward with Autonomous Vehicle Research, Testing and Development*, takes place on Wednesday, May 12 at 4 p.m. A panel consisting of an international mobility expert and two Autonomous Vehicle (AV) specialists at NMDOT will delve into the future of Autonomous (driverless) vehicle research, testing and the immense potential to develop a new industry in Gallup and New Mexico.



The second panel, on Thursday May 13 at 4 p.m., titled “*Entrepreneurship & Emerging Economic Frontiers*” features executive directors from three entrepreneur-supporting organizations and the City of Gallup’s Marketing & Tourism Manager in a discussion of emerging entrepreneurial opportunities in McKinley County and within New Mexico’s fledgling Outdoor Tourism industry. To join either or both panel discussions, send an email to melody@gallupedc.com requesting the Zoom link to the webinars.

“The measure of our success to promote economic development for our community lies within the strength of our incredible collaboration with our partners,” stated GGEDC Executive Director Patty Lundstrom, CEcD. “We are so proud of the accomplishments we have made this past year – such as helping McKinley Paper Company get a major economic boost in the arm. We are looking forward to even greater projects in the near future throughout the county in the near future,” she said.

Economic developers are charged with generating economic growth, creating better jobs for residents and facilitating an improved quality of life. The industry remains as complex, challenging and rewarding as ever.

“GGEDC is especially pleased that the City of Gallup and McKinley County are helping to celebrate the profession and the professionals that work hard to create opportunity for all citizens and their communities,” added Tommy Haws, President of GGEDC.

At the end of last year, GGEDC helped McKinley Paper Company obtain a \$5 million Local Economic Development Assistance (LEDA) grant from the NM Economic Development Department. The grant will support business expansion at the Prewitt-based paper plant and preserve 125 well-paid jobs while adding several new positions.

GGEDC continues its long-term partnership with Gallup Land Partners to develop the Gallup Energy Logistics Park (GELP) and build out Carbon Coal Road. That new 4-lane road will provide trucks a direct, 5-mile-long connection between GELP and Highway 491. GGEDC supports the expansion plans of Rhino Health, another partner, so it can better meet the immense worldwide demand for nitrile gloves.

Economic developers work diligently on many fronts in the greater Gallup area to improve the quality of life here. We all are doing our part to lift the economy up and out of the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic and to help people get back to work. We expect much brighter days for Gallup. We invite you to learn more about Economic Development Week and how you can pitch in through volunteering or supporting our visionary nonprofit organizations in other ways.

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