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COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<b>CDBG Awards</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Regional Highlights</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>COG Motions</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>RTPO Update</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>RTPO Cont...</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Notes from the E.D</b>	<b>6</b>

# Connecting the Dots

*Serving San Juan, McKinley, and Cibola County Governments for over 40 years!*

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NORTHWEST NEW MEXICO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

## SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT AWARDS

On June 2, 2015, the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments assisted the *City of Gallup* and *San Juan County* with presentations of their respective Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) applications. Two weeks later on June 16, 2015, the COG attended the Community Development Council (CDC) allocation hearing in Albuquerque and was notified that the two CDBG projects were awarded full funding. Months before the announcement was made, COG staff worked tirelessly with City of Gallup and San Juan County staff to develop the application. Typically the CDBG application fits between 3" or 5" binders which encompasses various documents dedicated to the project. Among these documents include: the Low-to-Moderate-Income survey, the general application, certification of site acquisition, the projects relevancy within other major plans, engineering reports, and resolutions. The partnership between the COG and the two entities sheds light to the importance of collaboration between intergovernmental agencies within the world of planning.

### **City of Gallup: Sky City Phase IV– Vista Avenue**



The City of Gallup's Sky City Phase IV – Vista Avenue Project was awarded \$500,000 to reconstruct the Vista Avenue roadway along with the replacement of subsurface utilities. The project also includes the replacement of sidewalks, which provide pedestrian safety and accessibility therefore allowing the pedestrian walkways to come into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Acts (ADA). Curbs, gutters and retaining walls will be replaced to address drainage issues within the corridor. The project increases the quality of life for the residents in the neighborhood especially those who reside on Vista Avenue.

San Juan County was awarded \$493,000 to renovate and expand the Lower Valley Senior Center. The project would expand the kitchen to allow for safer and more effective food preparation and the center will be expanded for the creation of a game room. The main dining hall will be renovated to include installation of new LED lighting, acoustic ceiling tile, and a new HVAC system which addresses the current issues around accommodation. The now current gravel parking lot will be paved and curb and gutter will be installed. This activity will address accessibility and drainage issues that have plagued the center for years. A sustainability feature will also be incorporated into the project as the exterior of building will be xeriscaped to increase the attractiveness of the center and more importantly decreasing water consumption.

The COG—with Planner *Brandon Howe* taking the lead—worked hard to assemble and submit the CDBG applications in a timely and professional manner, and we thank the City of Gallup and San Juan County staff for their hard work and assistance.

Congratulations  
to the City of Gallup and San Juan County!!!



**San Juan County: Lower Valley Senior Center**

# Regional Groundbreakings & Ribbon Cuttings

## Cibola Health Offices

On Tuesday May 19th, 2015 **Cibola County** cut red ribbon in celebration of their new Health Office. The facility cost \$1million to build and was made possible by a \$500,000 Community Block Development Grant , with the balance of funding from Cibola County.

**Eddie Michael**, who was Commission Chairman at the time of project development, paved the way for realizing the relocation of the facility to provide a better building for services to low income families. Of the estimated 1,000 patients per month that the Health Office sees, more than half, or 650, are WIC clients.

The new facility boasts a much larger size (7,800 sq. ft.) than the old building (5,200 sq. ft.), four exam rooms, staff offices and a classroom. The larger facility will allow for three additional employees, enough room for Health Department offices and a large meeting room available to the public, fitting 25 to 30 people.



## Thompson's Convenience Store

Serving the Church Rock community has been a lifelong pursuit for the Thompson store. Owned by Navajo businessman **Alvin Thompson**, the store has been in business since 1964. His store has served as the commercial hub for the community for many decades. On May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015 a crowd gathered to celebrate with the Thompson family the relocation of this historic and critical convenience store, which is being reborn to better service the needs of its customers. According to Navajo Nation President, Ben Shelly, the new store "will create 20 plus new jobs for the community." The new location in Church Rock will be across from Campaign Hill.



## Energy Services Employment Contract

In November 2014, the COG was able to close the deal with **Energy Control, Inc.** to implement energy and water efficiency upgrades in **McKinley County** buildings. The contract with Energy Control, Inc. provides for a \$2.4 million investment into County facilities, 30% savings in energy usage and over \$200,000 in direct energy savings, over \$100,000 in maintenance savings with a total of \$330,000 total savings over 10 years. The contract also boasts a simple payback in 7 years, meaning it will only take 7 years to cover the initial cost of the Energy Control Inc. investments.



# COG Motions

## COG Hires New RTPO Program Manager

In June, we welcomed to the COG team our new Regional Planner/RTPO Program Manager, **Jeremy Seaton**.

Jeremy is originally from the region, but has lived in Albuquerque for over 10 years. He also spent a lot of time traveling to different parts of the world, which helped him to approach planning with unconventional methods. His interest in planning began while working with the Zapotec people in the remote mountain villages of Oaxaca, Mexico. It was this experience that helped him to realize that the preservation and vitality of culture, land, communities, and resources was best achieved through participatory planning.

As a graduate student in the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of New Mexico, Jeremy's student cohort was selected to develop a MainStreet economic revitalization plan for Zuni Pueblo. Zuni was the first Native American community in the USA to be designated a "MainStreet Community." Soon after graduate school, Jeremy worked with the Navajo Tribe as a regional planner; helping to secure essential infrastructure for Navajo communities and vital resources for Navajo families.

Jeremy is excited to work with the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments — seeing the COG as a reputable organization striving to move its region forward by creating optimal economic opportunities through strategic planning and collaborative application. He looks forward to contributing to the COG mission of "leading the field to move the region."



Jeremy Seaton

## Internship Program: Third Year Progress

The COG Internship program embarked on its third year, successfully landing a strong contributor to the COG team. This summer Maura Schanefelt was welcomed as Planning Intern, working under the supervision of Associate Planner Brandon Howe. Born and raised in Gallup, Maura moved away for higher education, which took her to Tucson, Albuquerque and finally Athens, Georgia, where she received her Masters in Public Administration and Policy from the University of Georgia.

Maura returned to Gallup with the idea of only a few months' visit in mind, to visit family, particularly a grandfather with Alzheimer's disease. To her surprise she found two jobs: working under LegacyCorp and the Alzheimer's Association training caregivers of loved ones suffering from dementia and working as Project Coordinator for GallupARTS, Gallup's local art council.

Maura sought out the COG because she had heard about the various projects they participate in, the fact that they "walked the walk," and they were staffed by individuals that she'd like to learn from. Her mission is to be part of the growth Gallup is taking and be a "differing voice" against the familiar in order to provide Gallup and the surrounding community with new ideas for a better future.

As a result, Maura is excited to gain experience from the COG to not only further her own growth but hopefully assist the COG in its growth as well as the people the COG serves.





## Upcoming RTPO Meetings

### Wednesday, July 8, 2015 @

McKinley Fire Training Center,  
413 Bataan Memorial Drive,  
Gallup, NM

### Wednesday, August 12, 2015 @

Laguna Public Works Department,  
I-40 Exit 114 to Indian  
Service Rt. 55, off NM124,  
Pueblo of Laguna, NM

### Wednesday, September 9, 2015

@ Pueblo of Acoma Tribal  
Auditorium, 33 Pinsbaari  
Drive, Acoma, NM

### Wednesday, October 14, 2015

@ Navajo Nation Division of  
Transportation, Conference  
Room 307, #16 Old Coal  
Mine Road, Tse Bonito, NM

### Wednesday, November 4, 2015

@ NMSU Small Business Dev.  
Center, 701 East Roosevelt,  
Grants, NM

### Wednesday, December 9, 2015

@ Milan Parks & Recreation  
Office, 409 Airport Road,  
Milan, NM

### Wednesday, January 13, 2016

@ Cibola Convention Center,  
515 High Street, Grants, NM

### Wednesday, February 10, 2016

@ Chu Chu's Restaurant,  
1344 Highway 53, Zuni, NM

### Wednesday, March 9, 2016

@ NM Dep. of Transportation  
District 6 Office, 1919 Pinon  
Drive, Milan, NM

### Wednesday, April 13, 2016

@ Gallup Eastside Fire Sta-  
tion, 3700 Churckrock St,  
Gallup, NM

## RTPO Program Manager

**Jeremy Seaton**  
**505.722.4327**  
**jseaton@nwnmcog.org**

# Regional Transportation Planning Organization

## News & Updates

**Regional Transportation Plan:** RTPO staff finalized the draft of the Northwest RTP, which was sent to NMDOT for finalization by July 8<sup>th</sup>, when it was made available for review and public comment.

- **July 8<sup>th</sup>:** Posting of the *Regional Transportation Plan* - Public Draft for public comment and review (30 days minimum)
- **August 6<sup>th</sup>:** End of RTP public comment period
- **August 12<sup>th</sup>:** Present comments and have RTPO decide and take action on addressing them. Summarize comments and actions taken for submission to Cambridge Systematics Planning Team
- **September 9<sup>th</sup>:** Present final RTP for approval of RTPO

**4CITE Master Plan RFP:** The Request for Proposals was posted in May 2015, and proposals were received in response. The RFP Review Committee scored these proposals and met on June 12<sup>th</sup> at the COG office to discuss. The RFP Review selected the preferred contractor, but wanted to bring them in to discuss the project participation plan and meet all key personnel. This meeting was held on June 26<sup>th</sup>, and the COG is initiating contract and cost negotiations. The expectation is to contract by mid-July, with Project Kick-off occurring in early August.

**McKinley County-BIA Roads Meeting (June 5<sup>th</sup>):** RTPO staff attended this meeting at Manuelito Chapter House, which was in response to the County's meeting with BIA in Washington, DC on right-of-way on historically County-maintained roads across tribal lands. Congressman Ben Ray Lujan facilitated a productive conversation about streamlining the process without violating current law, rules, and regulations. RTPO staff will provide a report on this meeting to the stakeholders.

### Transportation Applications:

- **TIGER Grant:** RTPO and COG provided support letters for two applications in our region, notably Pueblo of Laguna and Pueblo of Acoma.
- **Tribal Infrastructure Fund (TIF):** RTPO staff supported the successful application for Twin Lakes Chapter, NDOT, and McKinley County for Johnson Road improvements.
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG):** COG staff worked with City of Gallup on a successfully awarded application for Sky City – Phase IV for \$500,000.

**Special Session (June 8<sup>th</sup>):** Evan Williams participated in the Special Session and provided a report back to local Managers. The capital outlay bill includes funding for many local and regional transportation priorities, highlights include: East Aztec Arterial (\$1.5M) and Allison Bridge in Gallup (\$4.5M).

**District 5 ZIPPER Meeting:** RTPO staff is working with Larry Joe on finalizing the NWRTPO-D5 RTIPR for presentation and incorporation at June 18<sup>th</sup>'s District 5 ZIPPER meeting in Santa Fe.

**Zuni Mountains Trail Project:** On June 30<sup>th</sup>, the US Forest Service released the environment assessment for public comment. This EA relates to a project to create a non-motorized trail system (up to 250 miles potentially). The RTPO has assisted in staffing the Zuni Mountains Trail Partnership for several years and producing a Trails & Conservation Master Plan for the project.

**EA Information:** <http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=40355>

**Zuni Mountains Trail & Conservation Master Plan:**

<http://www.zunimountaintrailpartnership.com/mapping-the-zunis.html>

**Thank-you to RTPO Leaders:** In May, the Northwest RTPO transitioned to new leadership on the RTPO Technical & Policy Committee, with a new election of officers taking place. The RTPO acknowledged with great appreciation the long-time service of **Royce Gchachu** (Pueblo of Zuni) as RTPO Chairman and **Stan Henderson** (City of Gallup) as RTPO Vice-Chairman. With Royce's and Stan's blessing, the RTPO elected **Raymond Concho** (Pueblo of Acoma) as Chairman and **Jeff Irving** (McKinley County) as Vice-Chairman. Welcome aboard!

## RTPO NEWS & UPDATES *(continued from page 6)*

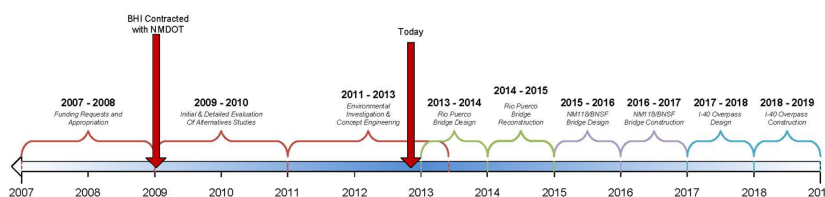
### Allison Road Bridge “Groundbreaking”

Tuesday June 23, 2015 was a long-awaited—but very exciting - day for the *City of Gallup*. On that day, **Governor Susana Martinez** and her Transportation Secretary **Tom Church** joined **Mayor Jackie McKinney** and other local dignitaries, staff and citizens in a groundbreaking ceremony for the **Allison Road Bridge** replacement project.

In early June, with the support of the Governor, the Allison Bridge Project was allocated \$4.5 million from the capital outlay bill passed during the Special Session of the State Legislature. The funds will be used to replace and realign Allison Road Bridge. The new alignment will straighten the road, while providing continued access to the City/County Warehouse without disturbing their use. Completion of the Bridge will then allow the bigger Allison Road Corridor project to move up the list on the Regional and State Transportation Improvement Program, where it will be eligible for Federal funding. The Corridor project will include several phases:

- 1) straightening out Allison Road and making safer and accessible to commercial traffic;
- 2) tying Allison Road into the road system around Walmart to US 491 not as a byway but to provide relief on Munoz Overpass and US491 for shoppers and local users;
- 3) a new I-40 exit and frontage road will then be created on both sides of the highway to make land that has been locked from development – open for business.

#### 2013 Proposed Timeline



The Gallup City Council accepted the \$185,719 proposal by Albuquerque engineering firm Bohannon Huston, Inc. (BHI) to update already-existing 2013 engineering plans, specifications and estimates.

The proposal from BHI includes necessities like: advancement of 2013 plans from 90% to 100% “final final” design, bridge rating calculations and coordination with NMDOT, and right-of-way maps. In the 2013 plans BHI included existing conditions needing to be fixed, such as: the structurally and functionally obsolete design of the Allison Bridge over Rio Puerco; sight distance issues; and congestion within the Munoz Interchange. Funding for the updates will come from a 2013 legislative grant that the project received for \$150,000 and from Public Works/City Engineering’s professional services account.

The purpose of proposed Allison Road Corridor improvements is to mitigate existing geometric, physical, and operational deficiencies; improve safety; and provide system connectivity to the existing NMDOT and City of Gallup transportation network in a manner that is compatible with long range local and regional planning goals to facilitate economic growth.

On the strength of the work of many advocates for this essential infrastructure, including Representative Patty Lundstrom (who has been behind the Allison Bridge Project since 2007), Governor Susana Martinez, and Gallup Mayor Jackie McKinney, this project has kept moving forward!





## NORTHWEST NEW MEXICO COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Important Dates	Date	Place
ICIP Deadline—Tribal Governments	7/13/15	Statewide
USDA RBDG Deadline	7/15/15	Statewide
CDBG Implementation Workshop	7/28/15	NM DFA (TBD)
Annual NWNMCOG Luncheon	8/26/15	TBA
Brownfields Conference	9/1/15	Chicago, IL
ICIP Deadline for Counties/Municipalities	9/2/15	Statewide
NADO Annual Training Conference	10/24-27/15	New Orleans, LA
NM Infrastructure Finance Conference	10/28-30/15	Abq, NM



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## Notes from the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Your COG is now situated in the old Masonic Lodge (more recently, the Stronghold Church) in downtown Gallup: 106 West Aztec Avenue. We're still "moving in," and there's a long way to go before this grand old historic building is remodeled for long-term use by the COG and its partners. But we're here ... and we always delight in seeing our friends and colleagues.

In the meantime ... it's been a tough stretch for us, as we negotiated the big move from our old building on 2nd Street, (they're demolishing it on July 11th) while keeping the momentum going on all fronts. In this issue of "*Connecting the Dots*," you'll see some of our celebrations and signs of progress—such as the full CDBG grant awards earned by the City of Gallup and San Juan County.

At the same time, we had some struggles this year with the audit of our FY 2014 books. Our new auditor, The Loftis Group, was able to submit our audit to the State Auditor in early April, and subsequently we were cleared from the risk list and authorized to continue in our various fiscal roles—including helping several of our member governments as their "alternative fiscal agent" under the restrictions of Executive Order 2013-006. The audit is on our website. Give a call if you have any questions.

As an outgrowth of "lessons learned" from the audit, and with the blessing and assistance of our Executive Committee—most notably **Billy Moore** and the Northwest New Mexico Regional Solid Waste Authority — we re-evaluated our accounting system, and effective July 1, we transitioned from *Caselle* to *QuickBooks* software. With the help of COG 2nd Vice-Chairman **Lloyd Felipe**, we're also updating policies and procedures, and are looking forward to improvements in our overall system as we enter the new audit cycle.

Our best wishes for a great Summer, and we'll see you at our annual luncheon on August 26<sup>th</sup> (details to come),

*Jeff*