

CONNECTING THE DOTS

NEWSLETTER



Volume 12, Issue 1

The Connecting the Dots Quarterly Newsletter is a product of the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments

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Greater Gallup Industrial Workforce Program



EDA – Assistance to Coal Communities

On December 13, 2019, a cohort of 12 residents from McKinley County graduated from the inaugural class of the Greater Gallup Industrial Workforce Program (GGIWP). The 12 graduates will now test for employment positions with Marathon Petroleum, McKinley Paper, Gallup Indian Medical Center, Rhino Health, and Stone Material Handling.

The GGIWP is a new 400-hour / 10-week industrial training program which results in students obtaining stackable credentials providing a pathway to employment and a new career. The training curriculum was designed collaboratively by Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation and various industrial employers from McKinley County including Marathon Petroleum, Peabody Energy, McKinley Paper, and Tri-State Generation & Transmission. Components of the curriculum include:

- Introduction to Safety
- Introduction to Pipeline Industry
- Introduction to Instrumentation
- Introduction to Heavy Equipment Operations
- Introduction to Welding

In its current design, the GGIWP has three program segments – curriculum review, work experience, and on-the-job training.

Candidates for the program had to complete a rigorous intake process which included among others a drug test and face-to-face interview.

Graduates receive the following national industry certifications:

1. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 10-Hour Training Program – Certification
2. National Center of Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Blue Card - Certification
3. ACT WorkKeys Skills Assessment - Certification

Funding for the Greater Gallup Industrial Workforce Program is derived in part from a grant awarded by the US Economic Development Administration under the auspices of their Assistance to Coal Communities grant. Program plans call for three training classes to be completed in FY19-20, with registration underway for cohort group #2.



The Greater Gallup Industrial Workforce Program Inaugural Graduating Class

COG Website Update

Web presence is necessary in today's world. Whether it be for business, education or entertainment, a website plays a significant role in ensuring that products are promoted, information is shared, contacts are made, progress shown, and work is completed. An up-to-date website keeps an audience informed and updated on matters relevant to the organization/business. Suffice it to say, a static website without updates of any kind is viewed by many as having no life and has nothing new to offer.

At this point in time, the COG is undergoing a complete website update to ensure that it remains a tool for regional and local development. The COG website will be a place for local agencies to obtain up-to-date information on area happenings and relevant data. Additionally, the COG website will play a key role in ensuring that relationships between federal, state and local agencies are established.

City of Grants EPA Grant

On October 7, 2019, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, through the Recreational Economy for Rural Communities program, announced their selection of 10 communities across the United States which will receive direct technical assistance "to help revitalize their Main Streets through outdoor recreation".

One of our own, the City of Grants, was named one of the recipients of this program and looks forward to leveraging technical assistance to improve the main street corridor by tapping into the outdoor recreation industry. As a recipient of the program, the City of Grants will be appointed a team of planners and industry experts whose sole responsibility is to assist the city in developing "an action plan to grow the local outdoor economy in ways that promote sustainable resources management and environmentally friendly community development".



Lastly, like any other website, it will provide the framework in which the COG was created and is maintained and will promote services provided by the organization. The COG website update is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2020. Please visit our website to see changes already in the works!



The City of Grants has already begun this process of capitalizing on the outdoor recreation to improve the local economy. Recently, the city has engaged in various projects including building new trail connections, boosting downtown amenities, connection nearby hiking-biking trails to downtown, and working to attract recreation-related economic opportunities.

The planning process will take place over the course of four to six months and will include a two-day facilitated community workshop as the focal point. During this workshop, participants will work together to identify a vision, develop goals, and outline specific actions that work towards improving the local economy by way of the outdoor recreation industry.

Work is scheduled to begin in the spring/summer of 2020.

Navajo Nation Food Mapping Project

Collaborating partners from Navajo Food Access Navigation Program (NFAN/Navajo Department of Health), Community Outreach and Patient Empowerment (COPE), Northwest NM Council of Governments (COG), and the New Mexico Community Data Collaborative (NMCDC/NM Department of Health) received a grant from the USDA Food & Nutrition Services Program to conduct mapping of the Navajo Nation's access to food. The grant, which was established in 2010 under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA), authorizes funding for federal school meal and child nutrition programs and increases access to healthy food for low-income children.

The COG, which employs individuals skilled in the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was sub-contracted to carry out the development of interactive food access maps that will be used to depict the scarcity of food and limited access that Navajo residents have to quality and healthy food. The COG's own, Carrie House, led the development of the interactive maps. Due to the vast landscape of the Navajo Nation, partners decided to focus mapping efforts on three Navajo Nation regions: the Shiprock Agency, Fort Defiance Agency and

the Eastern Agency. These areas cover all of New Mexico's portion of the Navajo Nation and parts of East Central Arizona.

Resulting from this effort was the creation of a "StoryMap" of food access on the Navajo Nation. A "StoryMap" is an online presentation tool that lets developers combine authoritative maps with narrative text, images and multimedia content. Included into the Navajo Food Access "StoryMap" is information, including maps, of NFAN's survey results of USDA child nutrition schools and Chapter community program locations, USDA food distribution locations, WIC office locations, available stores that accept SNAP (food stamps), Food vouchers, and WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program). Additional data from a variety of credible sources, including broadband, income, poverty, commuting patterns, SNAP, WIC, Indian Health Services (IHS), health facilities, gardens, farms, stores and food cooperatives were incorporated into the analysis.

To view the Navajo Nation Food Access "StoryMap" please visit: <https://nmcdd.maps.arcgis.com/home/index.html>



ZMTP Impact Award

In September, the Forest Service received an order from the United States District Court for the District of Arizona stating that the agency's "timber management" actions must cease pending a formal consultation regarding potential effects to the Mexican spotted owl. Based on this order, an injunction has stopped any and all work including trail building that involves timber activities. This has limited and all but ceased our trail building activities for the season related to the Milk Ranch & McGaffey Trail project.

Milk Ranch & McGaffey Trail System:

- Trail C & D: Completed including QA/QC and USFS approval
- Trail A, B, and 4: Partial completion
- All other trail segments have yet to begin
- USFS is documenting delays to provide the County with evidence for the need of an extension.

Milk Ranch Trail head: The trail head will be completed once cattleguard, signage, and kiosk are installed this Spring.

Quartz Hill Trail System: Kerry Woods has completed design for Priority #1 (Dark Blue Trail) and is working with Carrie House to groundtruthing remaining priorities. There are some challenges to overcome due to closure of two-track roadways and designing a sustainable system. The expectation is to bid out the construction of this trail system, while continuing to produce trail design plan sets (as whether allows).

Quartz Hill Trail head: A meeting was scheduled out at Milk Ranch and Hilso trail heads to have McKinley County road crews walk through process with Cibola County.

McKenzie Ridge Trail Connector: Kerry Woods is working on simplifying the design to create a more efficient and sustainable trail connector.



NADO Impact Award Certificate for the ZMTP Project

Project Coordination: Julie Padilla and Kerry Woods have been instrumental in coordinating the partnership and team, including the development of a new tracking tool to manage trail segment status to assist with project coordination and implementation.

Milestones:

- December 18th. ZMTP Cibola/McKinley County partnership meeting: between USFS (Alvin Whitehair, Julie Padilla, Kerry Wood), Cibola (Judy Horacek, Anna Larson), McKinley (Doug Decker), and COG (Carrie House) to discuss McGaffey area and Quartz Hill Trail Project; signage, cattleguards, and trails.

Next Steps:

- January 15, 2020 - ZMTP Partnership meeting, Grants, NM

NADO IMPACT AWARD: COG received a national award for its role in the Zuni Mountains Trail Partnership and Project. Copies will be provided to the US Forest Service, McKinley County, and Cibola County. Our COG has received this award for Adventure Gallup & Beyond (2002) and RISTRA Project (2015).

COG Board Meeting / EDA Investments

At the COG Board meeting held on October 16th at the New Mexico Department of Transportation District 6 office in Milan, the Board of Directors welcomed a presentation and participation for Jorge Ayala, Regional Director, US Economic Development Administration (EDA). He explained that EDA has been very concerned about the recent and impending downturn to the regional economy due mainly to coal market fall-out, and he highlighted all of the investments EDA has made in the region to support our efforts. This included the announcement of a **\$988,400** grant for workforce development and industrial site development in Prewitt and Milan.

Since October 2015, EDA has invested **\$4,812,377** into our region, including:

- **2015:** POWER's Assistance to Coal Communities: **\$327,300** in Economic Adjustment-POWER funds to the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, Gallup, New Mexico, to support Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments Economic Development District to direct and coordinate a study in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado.
- **2015:** POWER's Assistance to Coal Communities: San Juan College (**\$1.4M**) to the fund the School of Energy to increase economic diversification and re-employment services to workers in the region.
- **2015:** POWER's Assistance to Coal Communities: **\$147,900** in Short-Term Planning-POWER funds to the Navajo Nation, Window Rock, Arizona, to fund the development and implementation of a comprehensive economic development strategy for the region served by the Navajo Nation Indian Tribe.
- **2018:** Assistance to Coal Communities: **\$1,000,000** grant to Navajo Technical University of Crownpoint, New Mexico, to build a Metrology and Materials Testing Center (MMTC) that will help diversify the Navajo Nations' economy and train displaced workers in the energy sector.
- **2018:** University Center: The Harvest Food Hub was funded for **\$564,000** under a five-year grant to establish a food hub in San Juan County.
- **2019:** i6 Challenge Program: Under EDA's i6 Challenge, San Juan College will launch the Big Idea Innovation Accelerator at the recently opened San Juan College makerspace, The Big Idea.

COG staff was given an opportunity to meet with Jorge Ayala and discuss concerns, issues, and projects about our region. Mr. Ayala also enjoyed a site visit of the Milan Industrial Park with Eileen Yarborough, Executive Director of Cibola Communities Economic Development Foundation.



EDA Regional Director, Jorge Ayala and COG Director in discussion at Board Meeting



EDA Regional Director, Jorge Ayala and CCEDF Director, Eileen Yarborough at Milan Industrial Site

McKinley County - White Cliffs CDBG Award

In 2018, the White Cliffs Mutual Domestic Water Users Association (MDWUA) partnered with McKinley County to submit a CDBG grant application to improve its local water system by establishing a reliable water storage and supply system. The project contributes to efforts to build a sustainable and resilient community.

Need for the Project

The White Cliffs Mutual Domestic Water Users Association (MDWUA) Water System Improvement Project will upgrade a functionally obsolete water system that is over 45 years old. The project will provide new water storage tanks establishing a reliable water supply and capacity for fire suppression for the community. The project also includes a new waterline, a waterline sensor, a pump station, including new building, sitework, chlorination system, and pump controls and electrical. This Project will address the following community needs:

- **Health & Safety:** Provide the community with a safe and reliable water supply and provide storage and capacity for fire suppression to restore ISO rating.
- **Welfare:** Make the system more stable, resilient and less vulnerable to water outages, thus reducing operations and maintenance costs due to fewer repairs.
- **Growth:** This project will increase capacity by allowing for an additional 48 residential and 6 commercial connections.
- **Regionalization:** Project is consistent with the regional water plan and small system regionalization efforts, including Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project.

Project by the Numbers

Total Project Cost: **\$612,961.10**

Matching Funds: **\$59,042.88**

CDBG Award: **\$500,000.00**

Leveraging **\$53,918.22**

Low-to-Moderate Income (LMI) Percentage: **73.62%** (Surveyed)

Number of people in target area: **254**

CDBG Cost per Beneficiary: **\$2,673.80**

Timeline for Completion: **18 months**

Project Description

Construction and installation of a new 50,000-gallon water storage tank and a new 6,000 gallon-primary storage tank, including sitework and fencing. A new 8" waterline and 2" waterline sensor of 1100 linear feet. A new duplex pump station, including new building and sitework, chlorination system, and pump.



Mike Daly of White Cliffs MDWUA accepting CDBG Award of \$500,000

On October 2, 2019, NMDFA awarded **\$500,000** to McKinley County for the White Cliffs MDWUA water system improvement project. This project will effectively provide sufficient water supply for the White Cliffs community, the local fire department, and an improved ISO rating for the many families. Hats off to Michael Daly for his years of leadership and determination! Thanks to the NM Community Development Bureau and the Local Government Division.

Local Gov't Transportation Project Fund

During the 2019 Legislative Session, Senator Patricio Ruiloba (D-12, Bernalillo) and Patricia Lundstrom (D-9, McKinley & San Juan) introduced and passed House Bill 694, which created the Local Government Transportation Project Fund (LGTPF). The LGTPF allows the State to invest in a wide range of local transportation project types, at all stages of readiness, and only requires a minimum (5%) local match. This funding carries more value for New Mexico communities because it is not limited by functional classification (traffic volume) for roadway corridors – any road of any size qualifies for this funding. With \$50 million available state-wide, our region including the Regional Transportation Planning Organization and the Farmington Metropolitan Planning Organization, fared well with almost **\$13 million** allocated from this fund. Representative Lundstrom and Senator Ruiloba have now introduced **House Bill 26** replacing “local governments” in HB694 with “counties, municipalities and tribes” in HB26. This change in legislative language, will ensure inclusion of tribal communities. In addition to a relatively low match requirement from local governments, a hardship

waiver is available for governments who are financially capped. This waiver is beneficial for and has been utilized many small communities throughout the State.

At this point, contractual agreements for funded projects have been submitted to the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT). This has enabled projects to commence, with anticipated start dates in the near future. Projects are slated to be completed by January 2024.

Much appreciation is due to our new Transportation Commissioner Mr. Charles Lundstrom. Mr Lundstrom helped distribute this funding in a fair and equitable manner across most of the County, Municipal and Tribal governments within our region. We are excited about continuing this partnership to ensure that transportation needs in Northwest New Mexico are met.

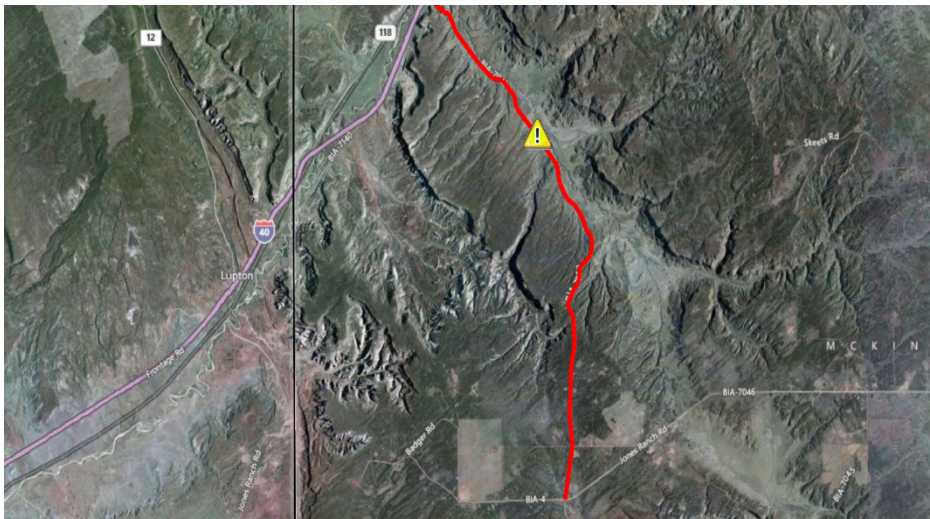
LGTPF Projects in Northwest New Mexico

DISTRICT	ENTITY	PROJECT TITLE	STATE	ENTITY	TOTAL
5	City of Bloomfield	East Blanco Bridge Project Phase II	\$90,250	\$4,750	\$95,000
5	City of Farmington	San Juan Boulevard Resurfacing Project	\$546,250	\$28,750	\$575,000
5	San Juan County	County Road 5500 Bridge Replacement Project	\$2,375,000	\$125,000	\$2,500,000
6	Cibola County	County Road 18B	\$902,500	\$47,500	\$950,000
6	City of Gallup	East Nizhoni Blvd Reconstruction Project	\$332,500	\$17,500	\$350,000
6	City of Grants	Washington Bridge Replacement	\$1,425,000	\$75,000	\$1,500,000
6	McKinley County	Manuelito Canyon Bridge and Road Improvements	\$2,850,000	\$150,000	\$3,000,000
6	Village of Milan	Haystack Phase II	\$120,248	\$6,329	\$126,577
6	Navajo Nation – Baahaali Chapter	Baahaali Transfer Station Access Road Improvements	\$281,437	\$14,813	\$296,250
6	Navajo Nation - Bahast'ah Chapter	Highway 491 Roadway Safety Audit	\$142,500	\$7,500	\$150,000
6	Navajo Nation – Mexican Springs Chapter	Navajo Route 30 and US Highway 491 Safety Audit	\$19,000	\$1,000	\$20,000
6	Navajo Nation – Tohatchi Chapter	Highway 491 Roadway Safety Audit	\$71,250	\$3,750	\$75,000
6	Pueblo of Acoma	SP 130 Veterans Blvd Roadway Project	\$1,136,912	\$59,837	\$1,196,749
6	Pueblo of Laguna	Interstate 40 Concrete Box Underpass	\$1,900,000	\$100,000	\$2,000,000
TOTAL			\$12,192,847	\$641,729	\$12,834,576

One of the projects funded by the Local Government Transportation Project Fund is the Manuelito Canyon Bridges & Road project. The project, which was awarded **\$2,850,000**, consists of the full replacement of two bridges and significant roadway improvements, is situated on Manuelito Canyon Road, a critical thoroughfare in McKinley County. Manuelito Canyon Road is functionally classified as a minor-collector and services the Chichiltah Chapter and other communities to the south. The corridor is an important connector between State Highway 118 (Interstate 40) and State Highway 602.

In, 2013 the Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management closed both bridges due to the significant deterioration of the structures and temporary emergency bypass routes was constructed by McKinley County. The bridges have not been be utilized since and the temporary bypass routes are now in critical condition. The importance of the corridor, including the bridges are significant due to its high traffic volume and use by a variety of transportation vehicles including school buses, service providers and emergency responders.

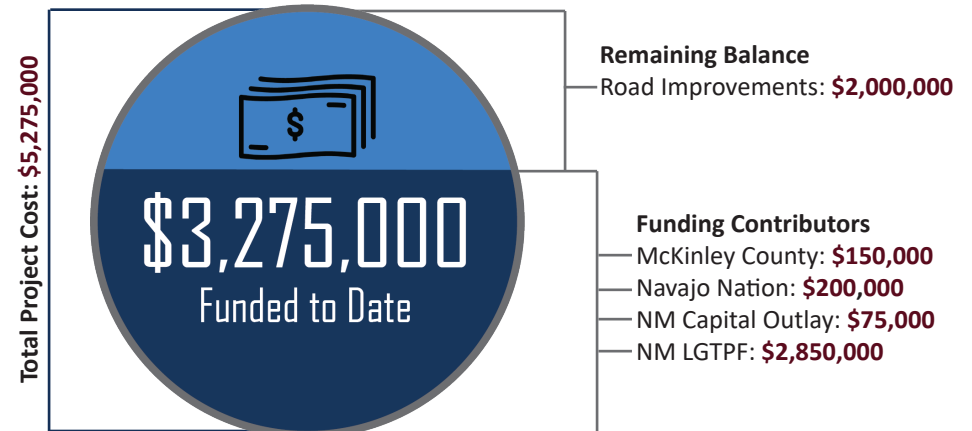
This collaborative effort has raised enough funding to complete the replacement of the bridges and surrounding drainage work. However, additional funding is needed to conduct roadway improvements to the areas adjacent to the bridge.



Manuelito Canyon Road alignment and bridge location



Manuelito Canyon Bridge - Temporary Barricade



A Message from the Director

Well, it's 2020 and I have been on board as the Executive Director for just over 7 months. The honeymoon period did not last long but that is to be expected.

First, I am proud of the accomplishments my team has made in short order. I feel like we have the A-Team and there is nothing that we cannot accomplish in order to uplift our region. I wanted to welcome Michael Sage and Brandon Howe back to our team. I would go through their experiences, biographies, and credentials, but suffice to say they are from the region, have passion and pride in our region, and have the skills to make impact and add value in its future.

Second, I wanted to touch on the COG Building Improvements that are underway, including the investment of a **\$75,000** legislative appropriation from Representative Patty Lundstrom.

- **Front Entry:** Thanks to Bob Kuipers – he has transformed our first impression from a pale non-descript building into a welcoming office dressed in local plants and flowers. We have reserved a plot that sits fallow, but Carrie House has plans to turn this into an expression of local agriculture to stay true and practice our ethics and showcases what is possible.
- **Roof:** The COG is working with a contractor to improve the roof on the main building. Construction is set to start January 21, 2020.
- **Fiber:** The COG approached Sacred Wind telecommunications about upgrading and connecting our building to fiber in the alleyway. This will greatly enhance our capabilities and move the COG into the future.
- **Mural:** The COG was approached by Gallup Main Street, Arts, and Cultural District to utilize our back building for a mural funded by NM Resiliency Alliance. COG staff rolled their sleeves up to fix building issues, prime, and ready the building for the artist. The artist Marina Eskeets has been dynamo to work with and is part way through with her vision.

I believe that all of these improvements showcase our connection to the communities we serve and how we model our work to the world. Plus, it is just a lot of fun!

Lastly, our region has just taken another major economic blow with the announced close of Tri-State's Prewitt Escalante Generating Station. I appreciate the groundwork that has been done in advance of this news to position our economy to bounce back, move forward, and build a more resilient economy. I believe that the COG needs to commit its attention and focus on economic development as there is no greater crisis to the well-being of our region and its people.



Artist Marina Eskeets working on alley mural project (COG Building)