



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Stacking Awards

Coal Avenue Commons Receives National and Statewide Recognition

Gallup, NM – On September 6, 2024, the City of Gallup and its partners received notice that the Coal Avenue Commons project has been selected as the inaugural recipient of the Placemaking Award as part of this year’s New Mexico IDEA Economic Development Excellence Awards at the upcoming Governor’s Conference on Economic Development. This conference is scheduled for September 25-26, 2024 at Isleta Resort & Casino.

This marks the second award in recent weeks as the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) also recognized the Coal Avenue Commons project as a 2024 Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award winner. This is a national award that celebrates efforts in advancing regional planning, economic development and resilience. The award highlights significant achievement in the areas of infrastructure, community engagement, workforce development, emergency preparedness, local business support, human services, and much more. This award will be delivered at the 2024 NADO Annual Training Conference in New Orleans on October 21-24, 2024.

“Coal Avenue Commons was much more than an infrastructure project – it became a movement” reflected Evan Williams, Executive Director, Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments. It was a community-based, collaborative design process that re-imagined Coal Avenue as a signature “event street” and creative commercial hub for the City of Gallup, McKinley County, and the broader region. Coal Avenue Commons is an exceptional example of creative placemaking facilitated by GallupARTS Executive Director Rose Eason and seeded by an investment by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and its Our Town grant program.

Creative placemaking harnesses the power of arts and culture to allow for more genuine public engagement—particularly in low-income neighborhoods, communities of color and among immigrant populations—in the development of transportation projects. Forget the traditional, staid public meeting format and instead imagine artists engaging community members using multiple languages to generate meaningful dialogues, capturing their creativity and local knowledge to better inform the ultimate design of the project. Done right, creative placemaking can lead to both a better process and a better product. The end results are streets, sidewalks and public spaces that welcome us, inspire us and move us in every sense of that word. Defined by Smart Growth America.

Coal Avenue Commons fostered the concept of partnership and not doing something for the community but with the community. With over 10 funding sources and a multitude of partners and investors, this project was truly a mosaic that was woven together under the leadership of the City of Gallup, who had the belief and trust to let the community drive the development process. Coal Avenue Commons was designed by the community and completed by an awe-inspiring cast of characters that went from a concept in a plan to completion in 5 years and transformed the built environment into a Commons.

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About NADO

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) promotes public policies that strengthen local governments, communities, and economies through the regional strategies, coordination efforts, and program expertise of the nation's regional development organizations. Learn more about NADO at www.nado.org.

About New Mexico IDEA

New Mexico IDEA is the statewide economic development professional association that promotes New Mexico's economic growth through focused advocacy of economic development issues and providing networking, professional development, education and training opportunities for its members. www.newmexicoidea.org

About Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments

Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments (NWNMCOG) is a 52-year-old regional development organization (RDO) recognized and empowered by the State of New Mexico and the US Economic Development Administration.

We serve the entire three-county region of Cibola, McKinley, and San Juan counties and the communities and tribes therewithin to improve community and economy for the region and its people. The NWNMCOG is association of nine local governments governed by a Board of Directors unified by the belief that we are stronger together and only united can we advance regional opportunities and tackle regional challenges from sustainable water supply to strategic infrastructure, and to foster community and economic development.

The NWNMCOG facilitates the Northwest Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) under contract with New Mexico Department of Transportation.

For more information about NWNMCOG, visit www.nwnmcog.org