

CREATION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ECOSYSTEM

At this time, Gallup is in a post-Covid-19 virus “*transition*” from social interaction restrictions to elements of normality. Following the transition will be the “*recovery*” phase, when jobs, investments and normal levels of trade will come back; eventually, we will see some sort of “*next normal*”.

Communities like Gallup that have protected their downtown commercial districts will have a decisive competitive advantage as we return to normalcy.

Gallup BID is working with legal, financial and economic development experts to expand the scope of its existing programs in order to provide assistance to Gallup’s property and business owners. Investors and developers who were interested in economic development projects in Gallup prior to the Covid-19 crisis remain interested today. They see this period as a delay in their work, not a cancellation. These projects will bring millions of dollars of outside investment into Gallup.

Gallup BID’s long-running successful improvement programs continue. BID funds that had been budgeted for annual and monthly events will be redirected to economic revitalization. In addition, Gallup BID is working with legal and financial professionals to expand the scope of its existing programs. BID will notify property and business owners within the BID District when the terms and conditions are approved and programs launched.

During the past decade, the core industries supporting the economy of Northwest New Mexico have undergone major transformation. Some have simply disappeared. Tax revenue to provide essential community services has suffered a steep decline. The regional economy is now in an emergency condition.

During 2017, NWNMCOG received a federal POWER Grant to study the economic impact(s) of the decline of the coal industry in our region. Highland Economics conducted the study and provided a very good report. That report was the beginning of discussions among Gallup BID Board members, and many others, about finding an approach that will address the current economic decline caused by the loss of core industries. More recently, Escalante Power Plant and Marathon Refinery also have shut down.

Loss of good paying jobs has had a severe negative impact on the region's retail economy. The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic enhanced NWNM's downward economic trend.

Loss of jobs, both direct and indirect and loss of tax revenue = urgent need to correct course.

Attracting and creating new jobs is an urgent priority for all of NWNM's communities.

In response, we have created a regional economic development ecosystem that will produce plans and projects that are actionable, measurable and repeatable. We need to produce economic results for the region.

The Economic Development Officers for the communities in NW New Mexico examined the merits of working, as a group alliance, with National Development Council (NDC). NDC is a 50 year old nationwide non-profit that trains, mentors and provides business expansion and economic development funding opportunities to communities. Zoom meetings and in-person meetings with senior consultants/trainers/loan officers at National Development Council are ongoing.

We have executed an MOU among the member organizations in our partnership alliance and an Agreement with NDC.

Our Regional Economic Development Partners alliance includes: Gallup BID, Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation, City of Farmington Economic Development, Cibola Communities Economic Development Corporation, Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments.

The members of our "Regional Economic Development Partners" (REDP) alliance work together via zoom meetings to review and discuss our own goals and plans. Having agreed that working with NDC has merit for us, we also discuss in depth how we may best work with each other. This includes attracting industrial, services and retail businesses to the region while also bringing existing buildings up to code so they can be leased and open for business.

The Gallup Business Improvement District Board of Directors believes that all of this work is necessary to make Historic Downtown Gallup a more vibrant commercial district with strong consumer appeal. Gallup BID is the lead coordinator and fiscal agent for REDP. We will continue to do a good job for Gallup and our region.