

## GGEDC workforce program receives \$50,000 grant

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 13 March 2020 04:47

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The Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation received a grant from the Marathon Petroleum Foundation in a March 4 ceremony.

The Marathon Petroleum Foundation, based in Findlay, Ohio, contributed \$50,000 to the GGEDC Workforce Solutions program. The program, which celebrated its first class of graduates in December, provides industry and safety certifications through classroom and hands-on training for enrolled students.

The program was developed by GGEDC with numerous McKinley County employers and stakeholders to provide support for residents interested in obtaining proper credentials to pursue a career in the industrial sector.

A GGEDC press release states the funding will allow GGEDC to support its Industrial Workforce Program. Specifically, the funding will provide program support for GGEDC as it looks to start expanding the program to meet local demand for enrollment.

GGEDC President Tommy Haws voiced his appreciation for Marathon Petroleum for their financial support, as well as their support in developing the program's curriculum.

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“This program is only going to be possible with help like [the grant],” Haws said. “We have access to lots of great people that want jobs, we have a world-class trainer, we have the will and the want. Your support is going to help us make this a perpetual program.”

This program is intended for people who want to make a career change, and will require a commitment of 40 hours a week for 10 weeks.

“Because the [students] are tested in the workplace, they get certifications, and they’re ready to roll then,” Patricia Lundstrom, executive director of GGEDC, said. “It’s a very good foundational program.”

Enrollment in the program comes to about \$2,500, according to GGEDC Workforce Development Manager Johnny Gonzales. This amount covers the costs of certification, instruction, and site use for training.

Gonzales spoke about the growth of the program, as well as what is expected of students who enroll.

“We’re serving Gallup and McKinley County because it’s the immediate area,” Gonzales said. “But through word of mouth, the program interest has grown to where folks from [as far away as] Albuquerque and [even] Arizona are trying to get here.

“Our [selection] process is not lengthy, but it is intense,” Gonzales added. “Students take a career assessment, and afterward they have to come in for an interview and make sure their goals align with what we’re trying to achieve.”

The next class of students in the GGEDC Workforce Solutions program is set to graduate March 27.

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