

## **Downtown Gallup receives Historic District designation**

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 16 September 2016 08:20

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### **Certain businesses now qualify for federal and state benefits**

On Sept. 8, New Mexico MainStreet and the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division announced that Gallup's original commercial area is the state's newest National Register historic district. The 12-block area has the highest concentration of historic commercial buildings in Gallup, with roots in Native American and Route 66 cultures, coal mining, and the arrival of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad in 1881.

"To be a part of this, your building has to be at least 60 years old," Louis Bonaguidi, owner and operator of City Electric at 230 W. Coal Ave., said.

Bonaguidi is president of Gallup's 36-block Business Improvement District.

"It's a designation that is very much appreciated. And one that carries some benefits," he said.

The historic district designation runs along West Historic Highway 66 and West Coal Avenue, and is bound by South Puerco Drive to the east, and South Seventh Street to the west. Sixty buildings and structures erected between 1881 and 1966 comprise the district, and the building owners are now eligible for federal and state preservation tax credits toward preservation.

In New Mexico, preservation tax credits are administered by the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division.

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The state and National Register nominations were approved by the state Cultural Properties Review Committee of HPD and the National Park Service over the summer.

The Gallup district is notable for hosting the parade portion of the annual Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial, which began in 1922 and continues to be a popular event. The parade route includes the location of several businesses within the National Register district, as well as the city's Business Improvement District.

### ***The MainStreet Pipeline***

A New Mexico Economic Development Department program, New Mexico MainStreet, works throughout the state to assist affiliated local organizations in creating an economically viable business environment, while preserving historic and cultural resources. The MainStreet organization serves 27 districts, among which are eight state-authorized Arts and Cultural districts.

Gallup is the sole municipality in New Mexico with a MainStreet and Arts and Cultural District designation.

Many buildings in the designated area, like the El Morro Theatre and the Lexington Hotel, portray the commercial and cultural character of the district. The Lexington Hotel features a roof-mounted neon sign that was installed in the 1930s.

Mayor Jackie McKinney said the designation will help promote tourism and bring more folks to the downtown area.

"It's something that is very positive for downtown Gallup," McKinney said. "It has positives for the business owners, as well as for tourism."

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Francis Bee, executive director at BID, said business owners are happy about the designation.

“There are benefits in the designation,” Bee said. “It helps with tourism and with tax benefits.”

Bee said a tax credit seminar is scheduled to be held in the coming weeks so that property owners can get a better idea of what the National Register designation means.

***By Bernie Dotson  
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