

Gallup launches new tourism website

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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\$80K site created to expand tourism, marketing

Along with annual attractions like the Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial and the Red Rock Balloon Rally, the city of Gallup recently unveiled a new form of tourist attraction — an interactive website that lets users see the city through the eyes of its visitors.

Gallup Acting Tourism and Marketing Manager Jennifer Lazarz introduced the website, GallupRealTrue.com, to the public at the Sept. 27 City Council meeting. She presented features the website offers via PowerPoint presentation and said the way people interact when it comes to the Internet and travelling has changed over the years.

According Lazarz, the new site will put the city ahead of the curve.

The website's launch coincides with Gallup's 'GallupRealTrue' marketing campaign.

"I have gotten a lot of positive feedback from people regarding the new website," Lazarz said after the meeting. "Most think it's informative and interesting."

The website was developed by HK Advertising and the Idea Group of Santa Fe. The cost to the city is \$40,000, which includes a matching amount from the state.

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The site has information about museums, galleries, ArtsCrawl, the El Rancho Hotel, places to stay, and tidbits about Old Historic Highway 66. An arts and culture component concentrates on Native American jewelry and culture.

Bill Lee, executive director at the Gallup-McKinley County Chamber of Commerce, said a tourism website for any city must have listings, events, and general travel information. But, he said, what really excites travelers is discovering a new place.

“You want to give a presentation that tells visitors what the city is all about,” Lee said. “That is what makes it so unique. Every detail, to the photography and text, is important.”

The city of Gallup entered into a \$185,000 professional services agreement with the Chamber of Commerce a few months ago for marketing services.

An “enjoy the outdoors” component of the website sheds light on attractions like the Red Rock Balloon Rally, rodeos, hiking and biking, and team sports. Another section of the site allows users to view lodging locations and offers booking links, too.

“I think it’s fun, it’s exciting, it’s energetic and it’s informational,” City Councilman Allan Landavazo said of the site. “I think it’s well done and it looks really, really good.”

Lazarz said she’ll update the site periodically. She took over city tourism duties about two months ago when the former tourism manager decided to call it quits.

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