

Gallup Council gets film update

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
Friday, 28 October 2016 05:06



Will Indian Capital land a film soon?

Gallup Film Liaison Lisa Rodriguez updated the Gallup City Council at its Oct. 25 regular meeting on the latest happenings around greater McKinley County with respect to filmmaking. The matter was listed on the meeting agenda as an information item and not as something that required council action.

Rodriguez, city film liaison for the past 10 years, is contracted with the city at an annual fee of \$11,500 to bring opportunities to Gallup. She puts on the annual Native Film Series that takes place at the El Morro Theatre. The film series is free to the public and offers films from around the United States.

“This is just a very general update of what’s been going on lately,” Rodriguez began. “Obviously, it’s not final because in the film industry things are always turning and some things can’t be revealed.”

Rodriguez told council members that two productions filmed in Gallup last spring will “wire” in late fall on TV:

RuralVet, an annual channel program, was produced by Gabriel Paduch, a filmmaker from Colorado. Rodriguez said the two-day visit resulted in consulting calls with the Indian Capital featured, to a large degree, in the production.

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The University of New Mexico's Cancer Center produced a commercial through the state Economic Development Department in collaboration with the New Mexico Film Office, Rodriguez said.

"[The commercial] was produced by Brad Morris, who is a documentary filmmaker and who provided the wildly successful 'Film New Mexico,'" Rodriguez said.

She told council members that Morris and the location manager, Claudio Ruben, scouted for about two weeks to find the right people for project testimonials.

"The project brought in 45 crew members from Albuquerque, followed by a complete production cast," she said, adding that both projects are set to be released late this fall.

Rodriguez said New Mexico Film Office Deputy Director Nick Maniatis was in Gallup Oct. 14 and met with State Representative and Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation Executive Director Patricia Lundstrom.

"The discussion was about improving film production activity in our area," Rodriguez said.

The panel listened as Rodriguez went through pre-prepared remarks. Each didn't say much, but seemed to take in what was said.

City Councilor Allan Landavazo noted that the city and its surrounding areas have been ripe for film productions in the past. He suggested that going for "B" type films might be the way to go until Gallup builds a rapport with the respective film producers.

"Some smaller films would be perfect for this area," Landavazo commented.

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Rodriguez said Maniatis walked through downtown and looked at storefronts and other areas that might be useful in film production. She said storefront improvements can set a film theme.

“Sometimes it’s a matter of something not looking the right way for a particular film production,” Rodriguez said.

Landavazo said Gallup would have been a good place for scenes from the remake of *The Magnificent Seven*. That film is about an industrialist who seizes control of a small Western town. Martin Sensmeier, a Native American actor from Alaska, was recently in Gallup to attend the annual Gallup Film Festival.

“I think this area can be successful with old Westerns,” Landavazo said. “I hope we get even the little leftovers.”

Rodriguez, who acted in a *Superman* film shot at Gallup’s BMX park many years ago, said she’s eager to work with the city, the Gallup-McKinley County Chamber of Commerce, and the community to put together a brochure about the film industry.

By Bernie Dotson
Sun Correspondent