



VILLAGE NEWS

Small Community • Big Possibilities

Volume 27 - Number 6 - July 2023

VILLAGE SECURES FUNDING TO BEGIN CORRIDOR/BRIDGE PROJECT

The Village of Los Lunas has secured the remaining \$45 million needed to begin phase one construction of the much-anticipated Interstate 25 interchange and east / west corridor project.

Area legislators and others worked together to be sure this project became a priority for all Valencia County, resulting in 2023 Legislative funding with House Bill 2 funds, in the amount of \$45 million.

In addition to this year's HB 2 funds, Los Lunas also secured more than \$10 million from HB 2 at the 2021 Legislative session for phase one of the project. Other external funding sources include more than \$53 million from the 2021 New Mexico State Bond Project and \$25 million from the U.S. Department of Transportation through the INFRA grant.

The Village's portion of phase one of the project will include \$5 million.

Phase one will include construction of the full, four-lane bridge, a new four-lane I-25 interchange, two roadway lanes with one in each direction, and full NM Hwy 314 and NM Hwy 47 intersections. The new corridor will be named Los Lunas Boulevard.

With funding available, the next step is to obtain the right-of-way and purchase it by December. The Village expects to have the final design review with the New Mexico Department of Transportation in March 2024.

The Village plans to have the bidding process start in Spring 2024, with the bid awarded in Summer 2024, and construction hopefully started in Fall 2024.

The Village will continue to seek additional federal and state funds to complete phase two, which consists of installing the two remaining roadway lanes, one in each direction, with a 10-foot bike and pedestrian trail on the north side of Los Lunas Boulevard.

The Village has been proactively working to move this project forward.

Work on this project has included --

- A Washington DC congressional visit by representatives from the Village of Los Lunas Council and Valencia County Commission.
- \$2 million earmarked for this project when Valencia County passed a Special General Obligation Bond Election.
- \$2.5 million authorized towards the project when Village of Los Lunas Council approved Resolution #18-15.

- Currently developing the Interchange Access Change Request (IACR).
- Actively preserving the corridor Right of Way.

The Challenge

The Village of Los Lunas evolved historically as a farming community and maintains great pride in its rural character. However, annexation and development over the last thirty years have changed the Village from a quiet, rural place into one of the fastest-growing municipalities in New Mexico.

Currently, NM Hwy 6 (Main Street) is the only Interstate 25 exit for Los Lunas and provides the only opportunity to cross the Rio Grande. Approximately 40% of vehicles that travel on NM Hwy 6 do not stop in Los Lunas.

The Solution

The need for a new I-25 interchange and east-west corridor is to improve traffic flow; access to high growth areas, and the efficiency of emergency response within the Village and surrounding areas. The resulting congestion adversely affects commuter travel; access to area businesses, schools and services located along NM Hwy 6; and the ability to respond quickly to emergency situations. EMS response times are a major factor in "life or death" situations.

(continued on page 2)

CHARLES GRIEGO

MAYOR

griegoc@loslunasnm.gov

DR. JAMES RUNYON

COUNCILMAN

runyonj@loslunasnm.gov

CHRISTOPHER S. ORTIZ

COUNCILMAN

ortizc@loslunasnm.gov

GINO M. ROMERO

COUNCILMAN

romerog@loslunasnm.gov

CRUZ MUÑOZ

COUNCILMAN

munozc@loslunasnm.gov

AVILIO CHAVEZ

MUNICIPAL JUDGE

avchavez@loslunasnm.gov

FRANK LUCERO

POLICE CHIEF

flucero@loslunasnm.gov

JOHN GABALDON

FIRE CHIEF

jgabaldon@loslunasnm.gov

GREGORY D. MARTIN

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR

marting@loslunasnm.gov

(continued from page 1)

The Village has been very proactive in addressing this problem and has spent several million dollars over the last decade as the local lead on approximately eight different projects in an attempt to upgrade intersections on NM Hwy 6 in an effort to alleviate congestion concerns.

Therefore, one of the Village's top priorities is a new I-25 Interchange (with a new east-west arterial and river crossing) that would serve most of Valencia County.

Major Stakeholders

Major stakeholders in this project include:

- * Federal Highway Administration
- U.S. Army Corp of Engineers
- Bureau of Reclamation
- New Mexico Department of Transportation
- * Mid-Region Council of Governments
- * Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District.

NOVEMBER 2023 VILLAGE ELECTION

An election will be held Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023, for Mayor of the Village of Los Lunas, Municipal Judge, and two Village Council seats Districts 2 and 4.

Filing day for candidates is August 29, 2023.

The election will be conducted by the Valencia County Bureau of Elections.

Contact the Valencia County Bureau of Elections at 505 866-2080 for more information and watch for information in the August 2023 Village newsletter.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AUG. 1, 2023

Meet law enforcement and emergency responders at National Night Out on Tuesday, August 1, 2023, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Daniel Fernandez Park, 1103 NM Hwy 314.

Food will be available at no charge while the supply lasts. Albertsons is providing the food and cooks.

A variety of community services will be giving out information.

A free child safety seat fitting station will be available. VIN etching will also be offered.

There will be activities for children and adults.

School supplies will be given out while they last.

STREETLIGHT PROBLEMS?

Have you noticed a streetlight off or flickering? Want to report it?

Go to the Village website, loslunasnm.gov, and under RESIDENTS you will find Online Forms and Applications. Under Public Works is the Streetlight Repair Form.

Use the form if you live in the Village of Los Lunas.

When filling out the form provide a very specific location and describe as best as possible what the problem is.

Indicate if the light is out, flickering, winking in and out, glass casing missing or damaged.

The Village asks that PNM not be contacted because streetlight repairs in the Village are centrally managed by the Village, even though many of them are repaired by PNM.

If a faulty streetlight is in the county, contact the PNM link to report that streetlight: <https://www.pnm.com/streetlights>.

DON'T LEAVE THEM IN VEHICLES

The Village Code Enforcement Division gets a lot of calls about dogs in hot vehicles.

A comfortable 85 degrees F outside can heat a car up to 104 degrees F in only 10 minutes.

If you are out and about, leave your animals at home where they can stay cool.

And make sure children and adults are not placed in danger in hot vehicles.

SPLASH PAD OPEN

The Los Lunas splash pad is open at Daniel Fernandez Memorial Park at 1103 NM Hwy 314. The splash pad is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday during this summer. It is closed on Mondays and closed for the season when temperatures cool down.

No reservations are needed to use the splash pad which will be on a first-come first-serve basis.

NEW ADDRESS

The mailing address for the Village of Los Lunas is now 660 Main Street NW Los Lunas, NM 87031.

Please update your records with this change of address.

The mailing address had been P.O. Box 1209, Los Lunas NM 87031.

VILLAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT

The Village has grown over the last decades and the police department with its officers has worked hard to deal with concerns and problems occurring because of the growth.

The Department produces yearly reports detailing how officers keep citizens safe. The 2022 report is now available on the Village website at loslunasnm.com. Its contents are divided into:

- Theft Arrest by Type
- Incidence Reports
- Response to Resistance
- K-9 Statistics
- Citizen Complaints
- Statistics
- Staff Photos
- Recruiting
- Alternative Revenues
- Calls for Service Statistics
- Organizational Chart
- Chief's Message

Village Police Chief Frank E. Lucero points out that in 2022 the department focused on recruitment and promotions. Six police officers were hired with promotions within the department including two detective sergeants, two patrol sergeants, two patrol lieutenants, and a detective lieutenant.

Police K9 Perone retired in 2022 after serving the Village of Los Lunas and Valencia County for approximately seven years. Perone is now enjoying retirement with his handler Officer Santiago Beyal.

Marcus Taylor is the new department canine handler with canine Jerry who enjoys treats and belly scratches. Canine Jerry and handler Taylor have achieved patrol certification and continue to train.

A major focus of the Village Police Department throughout 2022 has been property crime. The Los Lunas Police Department conducted many successful undercover operations in 2022 including auto burglary and auto theft, bait car, narcotics trafficking, surveillance, and retail theft. Numerous felony arrests and felony charges were filed after successfully identifying suspects involved.

In some cases, suspects apprehended and charged have been identified as working in elaborate organized crime groups targeting retail stores statewide. These organized retail crime groups have a significant negative impact on local and statewide economies, passing the cost on to consumers.

Chief Lucero thanked local partners for their help throughout the year – Los Lunas Schools, Valencia County Sheriff's Department, New Mexico State Police, Isleta Police, Belen Police, Bosque Farms Police, Valencia County Shelter Services, the Los Lunas Fire Department and the Valencia County Fire Department.

Lucero extended a special recognition and appreciation to the staff at the Valencia Regional Emergency Communication Center for handling emergency calls for service and radio communications throughout the year. He said that members of the Police Department could not do their job safely without the help of the dispatch center.

In 2023 the Village Police Department continues its focus on recruitment and combating property crime. In addition, many other important things happen behind the scenes at the Police Department.

Community engagement via Coffee-With-A-Cop events, National Night Out, vehicle identification number inspection services, Read Across America, and Literacy Night are just a few projects the Police Department is involved with. The Police Department door is always open for community members.

Chief Lucero emphasizes that the Police Department has a hardworking team of professionals doing their best for the community while ensuring the safety and success of the community. Team members are committed to hard work and professionalism working throughout Los Lunas and Valencia County.

PANCAKES FOR A CAUSE

Rotary Club of Los Lunas presents 2023 Pancakes for a Cause, benefitting Clothes for Kids and other youth programs.

The annual Pancake Breakfast will be Saturday, October 7, 2023, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Ribs Hickory Pit BBQ, 120 Nelson Lane, Los Lunas.

Sponsors are needed and sponsorship levels include:

\$1,000 Platinum - Master Chef (20 tickets)

\$500 Gold - Chef (10 tickets)

\$250 Silver - Grill Master (five tickets)

GUITAR LESSONS AVAILABLE

Guitar lessons for ages five and up at \$60 per participant are being offered through the Village recreation division.

Choose a six week (Saturday) series of sessions. Book and guitar will be provided (bring own if you'd like). These lessons are for beginner and intermediate players and focus on proper hand techniques, chord building and music theory in relation to acoustic guitar.

See this web page: <https://www.loslunasnm.gov/1015/Music-Lessons>.

Register at <https://secure.rec1.com/NM/los-lunas-nm/catalog> - click on youth activities or adult activity.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Take some time during your summer day to visit businesses in Los Lunas.

**Haute Mess Beauty
Casa Bonita Salon**
351 Courthouse Road SE
Angelica M Espinoza
hautemessbeauty@gmail.com
Casa Bonita welcomes Angelica!
Offering hair, nail and lash services
to men, women and children of all ages.

DP2 Crafts
09 Robert Circle NE Ste A
Annette Dixon
505 364-8805
dp2crafts@gmail.com
Homemade & handmade custom
crafts and retail giftables!

Restoring Strong LLC
428 Courthouse Road SE Ste 1
Jacqueline J Schnedler
505 916-1622
Offering mental health counseling,
consultation, education and support.

Eatin & Greetin
544 Main St NW
Jewel Lerma
jewellerma3@gmail.com
Delicious food truck serving
mouthwatering breakfast sandwiches
right on the corner of Main &
Don Pasqual!

A BIT OF LOS LUNAS HISTORY

"A Cultural & Economic History of Los Lunas" was written by Los Lunas Library and Museum Director Cynthia Shetter and can be found on the Village's website loslunasnm.gov. This newsletter will run excerpts from Shetter's writing.

In 1864, vintner Joseph Tondre, after emigrating from France, came to New Mexico at the invitation of fellow Frenchman Archbishop Jean Baptiste Lamy, seeking a healthier climate for his tuberculosis.

Joseph, his wife, and their four children settled at Isleta Pueblo to run their vineyards. His wife, Mary Josephine Mellecker Tondre, a French immigrant as well, was the force that held this pioneer family together.

Joseph died in 1870, leaving Josephine to raise their children and run the vineyard. In 1876, she bought 51 acres in Los Lentes just south of Isleta. She and her sons then set out to plant 30,000 grapevines and employed residents from Isleta to tend the vines under her supervision.

In 1879, the vines were producing quality grapes, so she taught her sons to make wines and brandies. Josephine died in 1882 leaving the business to her sons. In 1885, Mrs. Tondre gained national attention as Henry Mills Alden of Harper's New Monthly Magazine wrote, "The late Madame Josephine Tondre, at Isleta, was famed for her wine, and was one of the most successful growers." This was quite an accomplishment for a woman of that time.

SANCHEZ AT MUSEUM

At the Los Lunas Museum of Heritage & Arts at 251 Main St., SE (under the water tower) an exhibit of the works of artist and author Laura Sanchez titled "Faces, Places, & Unsolved Cases!" is on display thru July 22.

See this Facebook post: <https://tinyurl.com/mr2v6abm>. For more info call the museum at 352-7720.

Related News-Bulletin article about the exhibit, with photos of some of the art work: <https://news-bulletin.com/faces-places-and-unsolved-cases/>.

LOCAL EVENTS

Monday, September 5, 2023

Labor Day
Village Offices Closed
Monday, September 5, 2023
Garbage collected
Tuesday, September 6, 2023

Farmers Market

Tuesdays 4 - 7 p.m.
Heritage Park on Lambros Loop
Across from Smiths Grocery
Fresh locally produced items

Attend a Village Council Meeting

6 p.m. Thursday, July 6 & 20
6 p.m. Thursday, August 10 & 24
660 Main St NW
Main Street and Don Pasqual
Meetings will be virtual and
in-person. Check Village website for
agenda loslunasnm.gov.

Los Lunas Public Library Now Open

9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Monday – Saturday
460 Main Street NE 505 839-3850

**Los Lunas Family History Center
Genealogy Center**

Open Tuesday & Thursdays
9 a.m. – noon
Wednesdays 6 – 8:30 p.m.
Call 505 865-7305 for appointment
Located at 160 James St NW

AIRPLANE RIDES FOR YOUTH

The EAA Chapter 530 is offering Young Eagle flights on Saturday, July 15, 2023, at Mid Valley Park on NM Hwy 314 south of Los Lunas.

The flights are free to those ages eight to seventeen from 8:30 a.m. to noon at the south end of the field at the EAA hanger.

Breakfast and lunch will be served for a \$5 donation.

The Young Eagles program has dedicated more than 25 years to giving youth their first free ride in an airplane.

For more information call Lee at 775 842-9144.