



VILLAGE NEWS

Small Community • Big Possibilities

Volume 28 - Number 4 - April 2024

VILLAGE MEETS HIGH WATER SYSTEM EFFICIENCY STANDARD

The Village now meets the standard set by the American Water Works Association (AWWA) for very high water system efficiency.

This is an extremely important accomplishment and is the product of a great deal of work and follow up by the Water Department and Utility Billing staffs, along with assistance from Clayton TenEyck with Molzen Corbin, who provided backup as necessary.

Work on meeting the standard began in 2015 when Los Lunas was not able to account for almost 16 percent of the water it diverted, which is higher than the industry standard of 10 percent of diversions.

Lee Wilson and Associates, the Village's water rights consultant, started working with Britne Lee, Village Utility Billing Supervisor, to document annual use with the goal of reducing non-revenue water to the industry standard of ten percent.

With Village Public Works Director Michael Jaramillo's support, Britne has served as the main staff representative for this task, coordinating with the Public Works staff to ensure that:

- all customers are metered;
- illegal use, especially use related to construction hydrant meters, is kept to a minimum;
- meter readings are as accurate as possible;
- broken meters are repaired or replaced in a timely manner; and
- water loss incidents are documented.

As the years have gone by, the Water Department staff has become more attuned to all these issues, preventing problems before they occur or minimizing them when they do.

The staff ensures billings are as accurate as possible and that any adjustments are documented and accounted for.

All this work takes a good deal of time and requires a great deal of attention to detail and follow up on multiple issues. The staff often identifies problems as they occur and if a billing anomaly is noticed, they follow up on it very quickly.

As a result of all the work by several Village employees on a consistent basis over more than eight years, the Village now has a non-revenue percentage which is below the industry standard of ten percent of diversions.

Experts estimate that this has saved the Village more than \$250,000/year in water production costs.

CHARLES GRIEGO

MAYOR

griegoc@loslunasnm.gov

GINO M. ROMERO

VILLAGE COUNCILOR

romerog@loslunasnm.gov

FRANK LUCERO

POLICE CHIEF

flucero@loslunasnm.gov

DR. JAMES RUNYON

VILLAGE COUNCILOR

runyonj@loslunasnm.gov

CRUZ MUÑOZ

VILLAGE COUNCILOR

munozc@loslunasnm.gov

JOHN GABALDON

FIRE CHIEF

jgabaldon@loslunasnm.gov

CHRISTOPHER S. ORTIZ

VILLAGE COUNCILOR

ortizc@loslunasnm.gov

AVILIO CHAVEZ

MUNICIPAL JUDGE

avchavez@loslunasnm.gov

GREGORY D. MARTIN

VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR

marting@loslunasnm.gov

STORYTELLER VISITS LL

Save the date for an awesome storytelling event!

On Saturday, May 4, 2024, at 10 a.m., the Village Museum of Heritage & Arts will welcome New Mexico author and storyteller Joe Hayes to entertain children and adults with stories of the Southwest.

This event is free and snacks will be provided.

This event is sponsored by The Friends of the Los Lunas Public Library and Museum of Heritage & Arts.

For more information call the museum at 505 352-7720.

To learn more about Joe Hayes, visit his website www.joehayesstoryteller.com.

12TH ANNUAL VETERANS RUN SCHEDULED

Saturday, June 8, is the “12th Annual Los Lunas Veterans Memorial Run” fundraising running event.

This annual 5k, 10k run/walk race and kids’ K fun run begins and ends at the Starlight Theater parking lot beginning at 7:30 a.m. on Huning Ranch Loop.

The event is presented by NMLIVE, Inc., (Los Lunas Invested in Veteran Events) to raise funds supporting various Veteran organizations within Los Lunas and Valencia County such as the Daniel Fernandez VFW Post 9676, Blue Star Mothers, American Legion, Military Order of the Purple Heart, and Wounded Warrior Project.

The past events have raised over \$135,000 for the Veterans.

Detailed information, including the registration form and fees, racecourses, descriptions and contact information can be found on the website, loslunasvet.com.

META PROVIDES FUNDING FOR NON-PROFITS & SCHOOLS

Through the Data Center Community Action Grants program, Meta (formerly known as Facebook) provides funding for nonprofits and schools -- and their projects that help put the power of technology to use for community benefit, connect people online or off and improve STEM education -- to support the long-term vitality of Valencia County.

Here's this year's projects:

- Belen Consolidated Schools: To support activities, training, and real-world experiences for K-12 STEM educators through NASA-sponsored programming and support hands-on programming and workshops for women to pursue STEM careers.
- Belen Public Library: To support monthly events for students in grades 4-8 and their families at the Belen Public Library focused on biological and life sciences in the Middle Rio Grande valley.
- Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation: To support expanded STEM resources and programming at the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation's new STEM Center at Belen Middle School.
- Explora: To support year-round, hands-on community science programming for students and families throughout Valencia County.
- Friends of the Los Lunas Library & Museum: To support after-school STEM programming for elementary school students onsite and throughout Los Lunas Schools.
- Libros for Kids: To support literacy efforts to mail age-appropriate books to families with children 0-5 throughout Valencia County.
- Los Lunas Schools: To support hands-on education programs around wind energy, wind turbines and workforce development pathways & support the creation of community makerspaces within Los Lunas Schools.
- National Museum of Nuclear Science & History: To support free transportation and admission for students in grades 6-12 in Valencia County to the National Museum of Nuclear Science & History.
- TOTAL NM: To support the building of educational outdoor classrooms and spaces throughout schools in Valencia County.
- UNM-Valencia Campus: To support six technology and resource management summer camps for Valencia County students.
- Valencia County Literacy Council: To support bilingual digital literacy programming for adults in Valencia County.
- Valencia Shelter Services: To support enhanced IT and communication services.
- Wilderwood: To support development of the Autistic Self Advocacy Project (ASAP) database, an online and searchable database created by autistic people that identifies local autistic-friendly “everyday” services and resources.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Springtime is an ideal season for home improvements!

Visit our local businesses for tools and services to refresh, repair, and rejuvenate your home:



RAKS BUILDING SUPPLY INC.
108 CARSON DR SE
(505) 865-1100



ROUTE 66 ACE HARDWARE LLC
2510 MAIN ST NE STE B
505-508-4073



ROCK-IT-STONESCAPES LLC
3554 Highway 47
505-448-9699

LOCAL TOURS

The Los Lunas Museum of Heritage & Arts offers multiple tours of surrounding areas of significance.

These include tours of the Los Lunas Mystery Stone which will occur later this year.

Call the museum at 505 352-7720 for more information.

Village Administration Office: 505 839-3840

HUMAN RESOURCES

The Village's newly created Annual Report is designed as a communications tool revealing how the Village and its devoted teams are committed to transparency and accountability.

The Village is devoting sections of this newsletter to Annual Report excerpts.

The Village of Los Lunas Human Resources Department focuses on attracting well-qualified, diverse candidates who are committed to providing outstanding customer service and exceptional work.

In 2023 Human Resources:

- Completed a Compensation and Classification Study, which was approved by Village Council in July 2023. As a result, the new Base Pay Structure was implemented, placing the Village as a leader in our market for employee compensation.
- Processed over 600 job applications for Village job opportunities.
- Began implementing NEOGOV, a Human Resources Information System (HRIS) software which will give the Village access to Governmentjobs.com, a nationwide job search resource.

The Human Resources Department works to recruit and retain a skilled workforce so that Los Lunas remains an outstanding place to live, work, and play. HR also focuses on employee retention, boasting a turnover rate of 8.81%, which is well under the industry average.

The Village is truly one of the best places to work and has an average vacancy rate of 3.2%.

HR managed 50 recruitments for full and part-time positions across all Village departments. Each summer, HR hires approximately 60 seasonal youth employees to work in Summer Recreation and Summer Youth Employment programs, providing valuable work experience to local youth.

Employee well-being is a major component of the Human Resources Department. HR works to ensure that employees are well taken care of inside and outside the workplace.

The full Village of Los Lunas Annual Report is available on the Village website at www.loslunasnm.gov.

GET INFO ON ZONE CHANGES

The Village of Los Lunas, with the help of Consensus Planning, has been working on updating the zoning code.

Zoning is a tool that local governments use to ensure orderly development by implementing ordinances such as separating specific land uses, applying standards to developments, and applying setback and building height requirements.

The goal is to create a code that is easier to read and administer, and that aligns with current best practices to address the community's needs. As part of the update, the Village is conducting outreach events seeking feedback from community members.

As the Village approaches the final draft of the proposed zone code update, the Community Development Department will host its second community meeting to gather feedback from community members and answer any remaining questions.

Please attend the meeting on May 16, 2024, at 5:30 p.m. at the Daniel Fernandez Recreation Center event space, located at 1103 Highway 314 SW. Light refreshments will be provided.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the Planning Division at 505 352-7658.

www.loslunasnm.gov

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 is running excerpts from Shetter's writing.

Edwin Antonio Baca (Berry) was born in Adelino on May 15, 1918, the oldest of seven children born to Manuel Atocha Baca y Vigil, of Adelino, and Leocadia Sanchez y Gallegos Baca, born in Jarales and largely raised in Adelino.

After the United States entered World War II in late 1941, Edwin and three of his four brothers, Ramon, Doroteo and Gladio ("Lalo"), soon entered the military and, after basic training, were shipped out to fight overseas.

A member of the 5th Army, Edwin saw action in North Africa and Italy, mostly as a military policeman, an interpreter and, later, as a baker. Although seldom on the front lines, Edwin witnessed great loss and suffering.

In one of his most traumatic moments of the war, Edwin recognized the body of an old friend, Foch Romero, as it was transported in a Jeep driven by Romero's captain. Taken aback, Edwin forgot to salute the captain, who chided him for his neglect of protocol. Edwin apologized, saying that he had gone to school with Romero back in New Mexico.

Foch Romero was born August 4, 1918, in Los Lunas to Donaciano D. Romero and Barbarita Speare. Legend has it that Foch's mother, Barbarita, had a dream one night. She heard a large boom and ran outside to see what had happened. What greeted her was a huge hole that had been blown in her yard. As the smoke cleared, there on the ground near the hole was her son Foch.

The next morning the family received a telegram informing them of their son's death. Technical Sergeant Foch Romero, a member of the 180th Infantry, experienced a traumatic event which ultimately resulted in the loss of his life February 19, 1944, on the Anzio beachhead in Italy.

A plaque memorializing Foch Romero is located next to the Los Lunas Middle School football field. His father, on the condition that the field be named after his son, donated the nine-acre field to the school.

The following year, Edwin's 19-year-old-brother, Ramon, was killed by German small arms fire in Belgium on March 2, 1945. Grateful that he had survived the war, but saddened by the loss of so many men of his generation, Edwin helped build a memorial to the 16 soldiers from Tomé and its neighboring communities who had died in World War II.

The 16 men were Ramon Baca, Antonio Blea, Romulo Chavez, Paul Guerrera, Willy Lopez, Gregorio Lucero, Leandro Lucero, Feliciano Montaño, Luis Peralta, Clovis Perea, Arturo Saiz, Santiago Saiz, José Torres, Pedro Torres, Florenio Trujillo and Juan Vallejos. The impressive structure built in 1946, still stands near the entrance to the Immaculate Conception Church.

Edwin wanted to do more to express his faith and assert his gratitude for those who had died in World War II.

Remembering his father and the Penitentes' crosses at Easter, family and friends helped him build and erect three permanent crosses at the peak of Tome Hill and dedicate them on March 25, 1948.

His tribute is celebrated each Easter as thousands of people walk through Los Lunas to make the pilgrimage to Tomé Hill on Good Friday.

LOCAL EVENTS

Drive-In Movies

April 2024

Date: April 12 & 20

Time: Sundown

Location: Badlands Drive-In

Movies: Dodgeball (April 12) & Benchwarmers (April 20)

May 2024

May the Fourth Be with You

Date: May 4, 2024

Time: Sundown

Location: Badlands Drive-In

Movie: Star Wars The Empire Strikes Back

Attend a Village Council Meeting

6 p.m. Thursday April 11 & 25, 2024

6 p.m. Thursday May 9 & 23, 2024

660 Main St. NW

Main Street and Don Pasqual

Meetings will be virtual and in-person. Check Village website for agenda loslunasnm.gov.

AWARDS RECEIVED

The New Mexico Water and Wastewater Association named Village of Los Lunas employee Victor Gonzales Outstanding Operator of the Year - Lab Tech for 2023.

The Association presented the 2023 Good Housekeeping Award to the Village of Los Lunas for its CAS Facility Activated Sludge 20 Years and Over.

The Association presented the 2023 Good Housekeeping Award to the Village of Los Lunas MBR Plant Activated Sludge 20 Years and Under.

Village WWTP Superintendent Craig Byers received the John Clark Award for Outstanding Service to the New Mexico Water and Wastewater Association.