



Editorials

City Parks Budget Aided By Financial Institutions

It's well established, as we enter this torturous budget season, that all local governments will have a tough time keeping the lights on. We've chronicled over the past few weeks, the numbers with which the city of Española, Rio Arriba County, North Central Solid Waste Authority and all the school districts are dealing. It's bleak.

We're not sure who came up with the idea but local financial institutions are stepping up to help care for the city's parks. Del Norte Credit Union led the parade in October 2015 by taking "ownership" of Valdez Park, below city hall. Zia Credit Union followed suit in December 2016 by helping maintain Ranchitos Park. Century Bank just weighed in, committing to help care for the grounds around the Misión y Convento.

This help is desperately needed. Most residents don't understand what a luxury parks really are. They suck water, attract trouble and trash, require continual weeding, seeding, fertilizing, cutting, pruning, painting, grading . . . you get the picture.

Parks are really huge swaths of real estate used about four months a year, that lie fallow, attracting trash, needles and vagrants during the off season. They don't generate revenue and become an eyesore in the winter, but the public always demands more of them.

It's understandable residents want more parks. They get used. Drive by any of the parks from April through September and the tables and grills are in use, families are enjoying the sun, maybe tossing a frisbee or football. Children are on the playground equipment and sprinting around, wearing parents out.

But no one wants to help care for the parks, save these three financial institutions.

Española has four parks, in the

traditional sense. In addition to the three mentioned above, the fourth is the ball park on Vietnam Memorial Drive, by the fire station. It's more of a walking track with a small playground but does have grass, is used extensively and requires regular care.

The next phases of the Sportsplex, on Industrial Park Road, will add yet another park, with no more budget, no more labor.

Stepping up to embrace the gargantuan task of park care are Parks Foreman Ben Martinez, maintenance workers Evaristo Lopez, Michael Lujan, Justin Martinez and Mauricio Salazar. When needed, these city workers also get pulled into general services projects or help with the community service program.

Española has been scraping by maintaining our dearth of city parks for many years. With a paltry \$145,000 budget (not approved) and a handful of employees, we can't expect much in the way of maintenance, much less improved landscaping, new furniture or other amenities. Of the \$145,000 requested \$129,000 will go to salaries. That leaves very little for equipment purchase and repair and supplies.

Just watering the grass, picking up trash and needles, emptying trash receptacles and pulling weeds is a full-time job for a few folks during the summer. So it's very community-minded these businesses are willing to not only donate money but volunteer labor.

If your family uses the city parks, please let these financial institutions know you appreciate their help. Maybe clean up after yourself and your children. Come out and lend a hand the next time one of the parks gets a face lift. Children learn from their parents and this would be a good community lesson for the entire family.

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Graduate Rememb

About this time every year all over New Mexico sw

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The walk is ceremonial; the

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the urbanization of America ce

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will be staying in or returning

hometown, simply because the

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Some of them will choose

out a life in their hometown, wh

others will move on. Their fir