

Energy Logistics Park work underway

Transloading

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GALLUP — Something happened Monday that has been years in the making: Gallup Land Partners and the Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation began construction on the Gallup Energy Logistics Park.

A large crowd gathered in the second floor gallery of the Gallup Cultural Center Monday as Robert

Roche, founder of Roche Enterprises, which owns GLP, along with representatives from GGEDC and BNSF, announced the first phase of construction for the logistics park. This first phase, a railter-

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Dave Thomas, Engineering RailSolutions president, participates in the official groundbreaking ceremony of Gallup Energy Logistics Park Monday on the west side of Gallup near Mentmore.

Cayla Nimmo/Independent

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minal, which proposes 11,000 linear feet of track and will connect to existing rail loops operated by BNSF, will provide future businesses in the 2,500-acre park "premier shipping logistic services," according to a recent news release.

"What these men are going to announce might change the face of our city like it did in Santa Teresa," Mayor Jackie McKinney said, referencing a similar transloading facility in Santa Teresa, New Mexico.

Roche started the announcement with an apology to the audience for taking so long to get this project rolling. He said that for the past four years, this project has been going through the processes of design, engineering, permitting and funding

in preparation for the day when construction could begin.

Roche's company is fully funding this first phase of the project to a tune of \$4 million.

"We are going to show bankers why they should invest in this community," Roche said.

Dave Thompson, design manager for the energy logistics park, said that the design was centered around the topography of the area as well as several cultural sites as a part of environmental stewardship the company practices. He said this also leaves space to the north of the phase one site to expand in the future.

Steven Ellison, also with GLP, said that full-scale construction on the project can begin within the next seven to 10 days. The news release provided before the announcement said that operations at

the park are expected to begin in January 2017.

Ian Johnson, a representative from BNSF, told the audience that there is no facility like the planned logistics park on the Southern Transcon line, which is BNSF's main line that runs from California to Illinois. The aggregation of customers to one location is a huge advantage for both BNSF and the customers, Johnson said.

Jake Bracken, manager at GLP, said that the park has already begun the hiring process and is currently looking for employees of all education levels. He said the park was more than just a railway, but a gateway to a large number of projects like commercial development, residential, industrial and energy, and along with all of that development comes jobs.