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Statewide Biz Calendar Promotes Business-Building Connections

By Holly Bradshaw Eakes

New Mexicans never have to wonder where they can go to widen their professional networks or learn the skills that will grow their businesses or advance their careers.

The online Business Calendar — or Biz Calendar for short — offers the most comprehensive cache of information about the business events, workshops, meetings, certification classes and professional gatherings that are happening anywhere in the state today, tomorrow, next week and later in the year.

Public and private service providers use the collaborative web-based calendar to inform the business community about what they're offering, and economic development organizations use it to connect their local businesses to resources designed to help create jobs and raise the quality of life in New Mexico communities.



Holly Bradshaw Eakes



Sandy Wheeler

The Biz Calendar began as a project of the nonprofit arm of New Mexico Community Capital in 2007, with support from New Mexico's Economic Development Department, the Finance Authority and the Small Business Development Network. Organizers aimed to distribute information about events hosted by nonprofits and government agencies.

In 2010, Comprehensive Consulting Group, LLC took charge of the calendar and expanded usage to allow anyone, including those in the private sector, to post business events. The company manages the calendar as a public service project in tandem with Finance New Mexico, a clearinghouse for business resource information. The Biz Calendar and FNM are complementary tools that business owners and entrepreneurs can use to obtain skills and knowledge and connect with colleagues, investors and potential customers.

Since January 2012, the calendar's technological evolution has allowed users to submit event information without creating a password, integrate their event information with other web platforms and share events by email, Twitter, Facebook and other social media outlets.

Individuals, businesses, consultants, nonprofit organizations and industry associations are among the hundreds of contributors to the Biz Calendar, routinely posting information about training courses, workshops, conferences, meetings and professional networking events, according to Sandy Wheeler, who edits the calendar.

“When someone posts an event, it automatically shows up on other websites,” said Wheeler. “The state Economic Development Dept. and local chambers of commerce are some of many agencies that have our RSS feed on their websites.”

Collaboration with incubators, regional economic developers and the state’s 105 municipalities ensures events are distributed to all corners of the state. “About a quarter of the state’s towns use the link on their websites to connect their local businesses with support services,” Wheeler said. Event information is further distributed every Friday, when Wheeler sends a digest of events for the upcoming week to email-subscribed business owners and professional associations.

“People really count on it, especially those in the more remote northeast or southeast corners of the state that don’t have local newspapers,” she said.

The same goes for people who seek business opportunities and connections in parts of the state where they don’t know anyone and can’t learn much from traditional media sources. Because the Biz Calendar allows events to be searched by region, a business traveler can find and attend events in distant cities and connect with potential clients and business partners.

Find the Biz Calendar at bizcalendar.org. Reach Wheeler by email at admin@bizcalendar.org.

Finance New Mexico is a public service initiative to assist individuals and businesses with obtaining skills and funding resources for their business or idea. To learn more, go to www.FinanceNewMexico.org. Sponsored by:

