Taos MainStreet, Partners Eye Opening of BRIC

Staff Report

North Central New Mexico is on the path towards economic resilience and entrepreneurial support with the launch of the Business Resource and Innovation Center (BRIC) in downtown Taos. Designed to be a “one-stop shop,” the BRIC is poised to strengthen small businesses, nurture start-ups, and streamline access to essential services.

Located at 115 Civic Plaza Drive, the BRIC represents years of coordinated planning among local government, education partners, and business-support organizations, all united by a shared vision for a more vibrant and diversified local economy.

“This has taken a lot of time and effort from a lot of people to get where we are now,” said Charles Whitson, Taos MainStreet Executive Director during a recent phone interview. “The bonds that BRIC has established is key to making the Taos area a more friendly place for businesses.”

Working together

BRIC is the product of a multi-agency coalition made up of Taos County, the Town of Taos, Taos MainStreet, the UNM-Taos Small Business Development Center (SBDC), the Taos County Chamber of Commerce, and the UNM-Taos HIVE. Collectively, these partners have created a centralized resource where Taoseños motivated to start new businesses can get direct support.

The principal partners of BRIC, which include Taos County and Town of Taos – who pledged the use of the building – signed a memorandum of understanding during a recent Town of Taos Council meeting, ratifying their respective commitments to the project. Taos County has already invested in renovating the Civic Plaza facility and will support initial operational planning, while Taos MainStreet will serve as the BRIC’s primary operator.

A few examples of the services that will be made available to residents include: no-cost consulting and training through the SBDC; new business and not-for-profit formulation and administration navigation; and licensing and start-up guidance.

Features of the refurbished building include co-working offices, networking space and a newly furnished conference room.

New CDS Funding for Taos MainStreet

Momentum for the BRIC received a significant lift with the recent announcement that U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich secured Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) for Taos MainStreet as part of the FY26 federal appropriations process. The funding is included among more than $39 million in CDS awards championed by Senator Heinrich for New Mexico projects across economic development, infrastructure, education, and community revitalization.

The inclusion of funding for BRIC was included in the final FY 2026 Financial Services and General Government appropriation bill. This legislation passed the U.S. Senate and was signed into law by the President of the United States.

New life for an old building

As Taos continues to balance heritage preservation with economic modernization, the BRIC stands out as a practical, forward-looking investment in the community's long-term prosperity. And, as an opening date inches closer, and workers can finally move in, a new chapter can be added to the history of the iconic, pudgy edifice.

"Preserving the old building on 115 Civic Plaza Drive really adds to the overall satisfaction of seeing this project come to fruition," remarked Whitson. "It's an important initiative of MainStreet programs around the country to repurpose these structures that tie us to our past."

The building currently houses the Taos Municipal Court and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). It once served as the UNM-Taos Early Childhood Resource Center, with historical records indicating various entities and individuals occupying and/or residing within its walls.

Looking Ahead

With local partners aligned, county and town government support secured, and new federal funding on the horizon, the BRIC is primed to become a cornerstone of Taos's economic future. Its launch marks more than the opening of a building – it signals a renewed commitment to empowering local entrepreneurs while simultaneously building a more resilient regional economy.

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