

If we build it



David Salcido
On second thought ...

It's always exciting to watch an industry come of age. I've been very lucky in my life to be part of that process a number of times, in a number of locales, and each time is just as thrilling.

The maturing business in this instance is the Las Cruces film, television and digital media industry, which has been gestating for decades, but may finally have found its champions to take it to the next level. And why not? Movies have been made here for at least five decades, we've got two certified film schools located here and our high schools and a couple of our middle schools have media magnet programs that tantalize young filmmakers in their formative years. All we've really been missing is the infrastructure to make it viable.

Now, thanks to a dedicated group of industry professionals, business leaders and elected officials, calling themselves the Regional Film Development Advisory Committee (RFDAC) the wheels are finally turning in the right direction. It wasn't exactly a full house on Monday, Oct. 28 – when the Las Cruces City Council convened during a work session to hear arguments in favor of a genuine, city-approved film program – but what the room lacked in bodies it more than made up for in enthusiasm.

State Rep. Jeff Steinborn led the RFDAC charge with a detailed breakdown of short and long term goals, an explanation of the state film incentive and an itemization of the amount of money spent by the motion picture and television industry in New Mexico during the fourth quarter of the last fiscal year. His plea for the city to help “promote and accommodate” this multi-million dollar industry, so that Las Cruces and southern New Mexico could “get a piece of that pie” was succinct and to the point.

He was followed by industry veterans Sam Muir – who broke down the types of media that could be accommodated

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Mobile Milagro parks Downtown

Coffee shop experiments in new neighborhood

By **Alta LeCompte**
Las Cruces Bulletin

Conversations about Downtown often include the observation the neighborhood needs a place to pick up a designer coffee while enjoying the ambience.

But the pleasure was nowhere to be had – until Bernie Digman of Milagro Coffee Y Espresso parked his bright yellow van on Las Cruces Avenue at the corner of Main Street.

The converted van may not be the coffee shop locals long for, but it has brought the taste of fine coffee Downtown.

Digman, who owns the bricks-and-mortar Milagro at 1733 E. University Ave., pulled up about two months ago.

“We’re getting a really good response,” he said. “That’s always fun.”

Following the action

Digman’s eye-catching van has set up at special events such as the Gila Bike Race in Silver City, the Southern New Mexico State Fair & Rodeo and Pride Week for several years.

“It’s an old mail van I bought six or seven years ago,” he said. “I played with it constantly and then started converting it.”

A large diesel engine Digman had shipped from Maine powers the vehicle. The engine sits where the passenger seat used to be.

Digman installed the equipment himself, while Pat Demlock and his son, Andrew, did the wiring, painting and windows.

“They’re absolute geniuses,” Digman said.

The van runs on bio-diesel fuel Digman makes mixing cooking oil or filtered vegetable oil with lye and ethanol.



Las Cruces Bulletin photo by Alta LeCompte

Bernie Digman’s roaster is where Milagro Coffee y Espresso beverages begin, whether they’re served in the University Avenue shop or at the mobile unit Downtown.

“There’s no magic, it’s a backyard setup,” he said, made with a couple 55-gallon drums.

Because the van doesn’t have to travel far, the small-scale fuel manufacturing operation suffices to keep going.

“They’re absolute geniuses,” Digman said.

Betting on Downtown

Because the operation uses commercial kitchen equipment, it requires 200 volts of

electricity, which limits the places the shop can open for business.

With state and city permits in place, Digman parked close to a power source.

“We serve the same quality coffee as the shop on University Avenue,” he said. “If people want high-quality coffee and espresso, we can make it.”

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Convention center GM named

City wants close collaboration with CVB

By **Alta LeCompte**
Las Cruces Bulletin

City officials will welcome Rebecca Bolton as general manager of the Las Cruces Convention Center Friday, Nov. 15.

Global Spectrum, the international company contracted to manage the convention center, announced Bolton’s appointment Wednesday, Oct. 30.

An 11-year veteran of the industry, Bolton most recently was national sales manager for Global Spectrum.

She previously was the director of sales and marketing with the North West Georgia Trade and Convention Center and sales manager at the Palm Beach

County Convention Center.

Bolton will replace David Hicks. Global Spectrum currently is working to reassign Hicks within the organization, spokesman Ike Richman said.

During contract negotiations with the management company this fall, city councillors expressed a desire to attract more out-of-town conventions and meetings to the center. The management company opted to change executive directors.

City Manager Robert Garza, Assistant City Manager Brian Denmark and Philip San Filippo, director of the Las Cruces Convention & Visitors Bureau, met with Bolton Friday, Oct. 24.

“I was really impressed with

her positive attitude about the convention center, the community and being part of a team,” Garza said. “She’s the perfect candidate.”

He said that while numerical goals have not been set, the city wants to increase the number of outside visitors attending events at the center.

“We want to see the convention center as an asset for all the hotels and for our entire tourism industry,” Garza said.

He said there is room in the calendar for both outside and local events, which are “a huge benefit” to the community.

Garza said the city is looking forward to a more collaborative relationship between the center and CVB.

“We gave them the same mission and sent them off together,” he said.

“She seems to be enthusiastic and passionate about it,” San Filippo, said of Bolton.

“We will do everything we can to work closely together.”

He said the incoming GM has good experience, including positions with both convention centers and a convention and visitors bureau.

“She sees it from both sides,” he said.

The two entities will collaborate to develop new sales and marketing plans and operating plans, San Filippo said.

“She will work closely with Phil (San Filippo) and the CVB with the focus being to bring in as much out-of-town business as possible,”

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