



Bernalillo County...Open for Business

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Commissioner
Wayne A. Johnson
District 5

Off the highway just a bit in Sandia Park, 24 Huacaya alpacas share almost 10 acres named Hollywick Farms with owners Bill and Kathy Herman. Bill and Kathy weren't born to farming or raising livestock; rather it was a love of animals in general and a chance meeting with these particular magical animals that shepherded the Hermans to this way of life.

Today the Hermans care for their alpacas, create natural and custom-dyed yarn from their award-winning fleece, and fashion several products from that fleece. The farm also boasts a gift shop filled with Hollywick-handcrafted items and other things alpaca from other areas of the country and the world. The farm is open for tours and is frequented by local residents, school children and tourists.

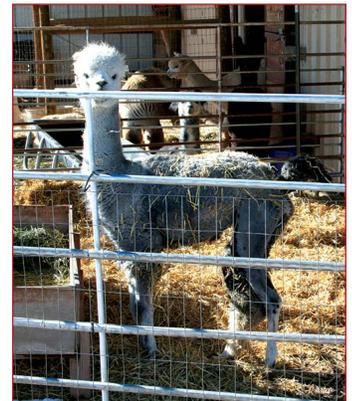


Bill & Kathy Herman
of Hollywick Farms

Bill recalls that the original idea was to establish an alpaca farm after retirement. Like many good ideas, it couldn't wait and so Hollywick Farms came to be when they were both still working full time. Bill was a software industry executive and Kathy, who is trained as an artist, had Albuquerque's largest frozen cat and dog food wholesale/retail business. Kathy had been introduced to alpacas through some of her customers. She shared her infatuation with Bill, and so it began.

HOLLYWICK: SHARING (SHEARING) THE MAGIC

The anticipated life and work with alpacas that started seven years ago is not the reality that the Hermans live today and that's just fine with them. A decade ago, the business model for the alpaca business closely resembled that of the Arabian horse industry: breed, raise, show and sell. This model, while proven and also approved by their accountant, was not a perfect fit.



Captain Jack
(recovering from knee surgery)
catches some sun.

The shows (which are not local) demand a lot of travel and for people holding down full-time jobs, it required more of a time investment than they could afford. Fortunately, there was another movement gaining momentum in the alpaca world: one focused on the fleece and its products. This evolution in their business was made easier because Kathy's skills as an artist were readily engaged. She can dye (custom or natural colors), weave, knit, crochet and felt the sheared fleece into a variety of products, all of which are for sale at Hollywick Farms. Also, this area of New Mexico nurtures a vibrant fiber artist network, so Kathy's skills working with award-winning fleece has a built-in, appreciative customer base.

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But it is not all about the fleece. It truly is all about the alpacas. The Hermans breed alpacas and they board them as well for others. In fact, when Hollywick first started in 2007, the original five-alpaca herd was boarded between two farms—one in the North Valley of Bernalillo County and one in Santa Fe until May 2008 when the facilities were completed. The alpacas are the second animal that the Hermans have raised. Hollywick was the name of one of their first Labrador Retrievers and Kathy adopted the name Hollywick Labradors as her kennel name when she started raising and showing Labradors in the 1970s.

A DIFFERENT LIFESTYLE

Transitioning from the world of software design and retail was welcome but still a change, more so for Bill than Kathy, as she was already experienced with working with animals daily. Bill explains that alpacas require very tender, quiet care since they are prey animals, and therefore skittish. He shared that it was a very good lesson for him—a good thing that he was forced to move quietly, slowly. He and Kathy both will tell you that there is something magical, ethereal about these animals.

In addition to their psychology, there is also a lot to know and understand about alpacas and their physiology. Bill has become very knowledgeable about their digestive systems. Alpacas, a member of the South American Camelid family, are ruminants and have three stomachs (they do chew their cud). They mimic borderline diabetics (produce little insulin) and so their diets need to be finely tuned (grass hay and limited grains) so that their nutrition is proper. One size does not fit all when it comes to diet, and it takes time, trial and error, and various combinations of food to compose a diet that is beneficial to the animals in general and sometimes individually. That attention to detail and that demonstration of care is what makes Hollywick thrive on many levels and the Hermans wouldn't want it any other way.

Bill & Kathy Herman
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Perspective

We start this year with many projects in place and others in the making. The news is good and the promise of it getting even better encouraging. This increase in movement, traction, success is the result of synergy—several factions and private entities working towards a common goal—to enhance the quality of life in Bernalillo County through job creation across all business segments.



Much of the work in Bernalillo County focuses on fortifying and expanding the opportunities for the majority of our residents—skilled people who excel in jobs in manufacturing, hospitality, and service companies. The reason/approach is basic: this is the majority of people ready to work right now and needing work right now fall into these sectors. Our commitment is to assist companies looking to start up, expand or relocate operations here. By securing the job base of the majority, which is the group that spends the most money in the local economy, we deliver on our goal to help to enhance the quality of life for our residents.

Most of the companies with which we work are small businesses (businesses with fewer than 500 employees). Most of these companies are locally owned. Most of these companies employ the majority of their staffs with local people. By assisting their efforts, we help assure that our residents are gainfully employed, that they are able to continue to live and thrive in Bernalillo County, and that the local economy is bolstered by their support of the service companies (grocers, dry cleaners, retail and more).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mayling Armijo'.

Mayling Armijo, Director
Economic Development Department

BERNALILLO COUNTY 

WE'RE MORE THAN YOU THINK

Around the County

Commissioner Debbie O'Malley, District 1, addressed the crowd at the opening celebration of **LA COCINA VERDE** (*The Green Kitchen*) at the Bernalillo County Youth Services Center. The project, she explained, provides the youth at the center with the opportunity to understand the connection between food, health, and community. Craig Sparks, director, Youth Services Center, is on the left. This celebration happened in Fall 2014 when Commissioner O'Malley was chair.



Commissioner Art De La Cruz, District 2 and Albuquerque Mayor Richard Berry prepare to hang up their hardhats (shovels were already put away) at the Jan. 13, 2015 groundbreaking ceremonies for a new development that will include new apartments and a long-awaited grocery store in Downtown Albuquerque. It's called the Imperial Building at 205 Silver Ave. SW. The Bernalillo County Commission approved an \$11.3 million industrial revenue bond package for this project.

Commissioner Maggie Hart Stebbins, District 3, gave remarks at a press event in October 2014 about Flagship Foods. The company has relocated to Bernalillo County and is hiring 125 people to work in its food processing facility (the former Albuquerque Tortilla Factory) near I-25 and Comanche. The Bernalillo County Commission has approved a \$150,000 Local Economic Development Act grant for Flagship Food Group, LLC to export products using New Mexico chile and a \$10.25 million industrial revenue bond package that would finance equipment and building improvements.



Commissioner Lonnie Talbert, District 4, was among the guest speakers at the December 2014 re-opening of the Paseo del Norte /I-25 Interchange, joining Governor Susanna Martinez, Mayor Richard Berry, Councilor Dan Lewis and others on stage. This major transportation endeavor began in October 2013 and was completed ahead of schedule.

Commissioner Wayne A. Johnson, District 5, (left) was a guest at the Biz Gratis Jingle Mingle, sponsored by the Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce event, hosted by DJ Heckes of Exhíb-It (center). Gary Oppedahl (right), Economic Development director for the city participated as well. More than 500 business people from Bernalillo County attended the December 2014 networking event.



Film Corner

by Amanda Colburn, Special Events Coordinator



Film BernCo had a fantastic 2014 permitting over 13 productions and issuing over 40 permits throughout the year with some having standing locations at Bernalillo County owned properties. We look forward to an even busier 2015! We are currently working with three productions and anticipate several more in the near future.

STATS:

by Marcos Gonzales, Section Manager



Met with 20 businesses.

Assisted in the creation of 195 new jobs.



Overview

by Daniel J. Beaman, Special Projects Coordinator

Food Forward (Agricultural Collaborative): Economic Development staff attended a meeting presented by Eric Griego reconvening the Food Forward group as part of the overall Agricultural Collaborative meeting hosted by the Mid Region Council of Governments in Albuquerque. In late 2014, the Food Forward portion was introduced by Bernalillo County Commission Chair Debbie O'Malley and then program then continued with each working group providing updates on recent developments in the areas of market access, distribution, land & water, regulations, co-ops, infrastructure, and capital & equipment.

Economic Development Department Strategic Plan: Economic Development staff received the final product of its strategic plan as prepared by 40 BLU, LLC. This document encapsulates administrative marketing support for the creation of a comprehensive strategic plan for our department. This plan, which reflects county goals, will help our department implement its mission to attract, retain and grow business activity and jobs for Bernalillo County through providing economic development services to county business owners. Maintaining a viable business community contributes to enhancing the quality of life for all Bernalillo County residents and makes best use of taxpayer dollars.

ABQid: Economic Development staff attended an ABQid Cofounder Finding Party (#CoFindMe). This event was held in the Verge Building and hosted by Webb Johnson in conjunction with the Anderson School Business Plan Competition. It is intended for aspiring entrepreneurs who may need someone else to round out their team – potentially a developer, financier, or marketer. The format is similar to a Startup-Weekend, where an idea is pitched for one minute each by an entrepreneur and then a time for networking is facilitated.

Emerging Trends in Real Estate 2014 Report:

Economic Development staff attended this luncheon for subject report. Keynote Speaker was Maureen McAvey (Senior Resident Fellow Bucksbaum Family Chair for Retail). Emerging Trends in Real Estate is a trends and forecast publication with a 35-year history (undertaken jointly by PwC and ULI) and provides an outlook on U.S. investment and development trends, real estate finance and capital markets, property sectors, metropolitan areas, and other real estate issues. The local panel also gave an update on policy, education and workforce as a follow up to last year's framework of creating jobs and economic development.