

City is back in business

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Amidst applause and confetti flying, Alamosa city councilors past and present cut the ribbon on the new City of Alamosa municipal complex on Wednesday. From left are Councilor Marcia Tuggle, long-time Mayor Farris Bervig, current Mayor Kathy Rogers, former City Councilor Ron Green, long-time Councilor Charles Griego, Councilor Leland Romero, Councilor Rusty Johnson, Mayor Pro Tem Josef Lucero and Councilor Greg Gillaspie.

ALAMOSA — “What a proud and wonderful day for Alamosa,” Mayor Kathy Rogers exclaimed on Wednesday afternoon during the grand opening for the new city hall/library complex.

“This building is beautiful but what is beautiful about this great achievement is not the beautiful aesthetics of the building but what is going to happen in this complex,” Rogers said.

With the new building and the completion next spring of the renovation of the existing city hall for police and fire departments, all of the city’s departments will be accessible to city residents in one location, Rogers said.

The city hall/library complex is handicap accessible, Rogers added, which the former city hall was not.

“This is your building,” Rogers told the crowd gathered for the grand opening ceremonies.

She said although she and the current council were lucky enough to be the ones to be in office when the new building was constructed, the efforts to build it began long before their tenure. Rogers recognized former Councilors Ron Green and Del Gay, who were present for the grand opening, and her mentor, long-time Mayor Farris Bervig. She also recognized Don Wuckert who served on city council when the former city hall was constructed and went through growing pains similar to the ones this current council encountered. Wuckert encouraged the current council to move forward with the new city hall/library.

Rogers also acknowledged the council with whom she serves and said she feels privileged to work with them in serving the city. “You guys are awesome,” she said.

Each councilor said a few words before cutting the ribbon on the new municipal complex.

Councilor Leland Romero said this was a great idea that had come true. Councilor Marcia Tuggle said this was an exciting accomplishment for those who had been planning this for years.

She added, “We have built this not only for the present but for the future of Alamosa.”

Councilor Charles Griego, who has served on council for 28 years, said this new facility should last as long as the former one. He thanked the Friends of the Library for working towards the new library.

Councilor Rusty Johnson reminded the crowd that until the police move into their remodeled facility, “we are not done.” That move is anticipated next spring.

Councilor Greg Gillaspie thanked “everyone who made it happen,” and Councilor Josef Lucero, re-elected to the council the previous day, said the new building was one the community could be proud of.

Mayor Farris Bervig, who served the city for 24 years, said the new facility was an example of what can happen when a community works together.

Library Board President Richard Loosbrock gave a history of the public library, which dates to 1902, and he said it will be a fitting 110th anniversary celebration next year to be in a new facility. He also spoke about how libraries here and around the country had benefited from Andrew Carnegie and how that same spirit of the old Carnegie libraries still lives in libraries today.

Many people participated in a ceremonious passing of books through a human chain from the old Southern Peaks Public Library to the new Alamosa Public Library.

City council also thanked the staff for their efforts in physically making the move from the old building to the new.

“We are so fortunate to have the outstanding staff we have,” Rogers said.

The council held their first meeting in the new building later that evening. The agenda was light, and the meeting lasted about an hour. Councilors received hands-on practice with the new microphone system under the tutelage of City IT Director Jim Belknap.

The council approved the move from the 2012 budget year to this year of up to \$54,000 in capital funds for the police department to purchase two new Ford Crown Victoria vehicles because they may not be available after this year.

City Manager Nathan Cherpeski also gave a brief update on the remainder of the city facility project involving the renovation of the former city hall for police and fire departments. He said asbestos abatement has begun in the old building and should be completed in 10-12 days. He said exterior work would be undertaken as long as weather permits.

Cherpeski said he is looking at early March as the move-in date for the police department.