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Editorial: Industrial park project is a welcome addition

Staff Writer

Following years of planning, and even a few setbacks along the way, the 78-acre **Animas Industrial Park** is open for business north of Bloomfield. Rio Real Estate Investment Opportunities, an Albuquerque company charged with drawing economic-base businesses to the park, closed on the \$2 million property in September. Tim Cummins, with Rio Real Estate, says the company already is talking to potential clients who are looking to either expand or relocate to San Juan County.

Community and economic development leaders have tried for years to secure land for a much-needed industrial park. One potential site near Bloomfield was riddled with pipelines and other roadblocks. Other locations just didn't seem to measure up for one reason or another.

The **Animas Industrial Park** is a welcome addition to San Juan County. We hope it is soon filled either with new businesses or existing companies that want to expand in northwest New Mexico.

Economic-base companies, those bringing new dollars into the economy from outside the region, consistently have looked elsewhere because of San Juan County's lack of available land. The new industrial park, while not overly large, is certainly a step in the right direction to help bolster the local economy.

Located in a prime position near U.S. 550 between Aztec and Bloomfield, the park should serve its future tenants well. Rio Real Estate plans to sell and lease the land and buildings. In addition, the rural location allows developers the ability to offer competitive incentive packages that include job training and tax breaks.

An Oct. 15 ground-breaking ceremony at **Animas Industrial Park** was reason to celebrate for all who were involved in years of effort to finally get such a site open.

"We're finally getting the infrastructure," San Juan Economic Development Service Executive Director Margaret McDaniel said. "Eighty acres may not be much for other places, but to us it's a gold mine."

Keith Johnson, Bloomfield's city manager, added the new industrial park will help diversify employment opportunities in the region.

"Oil and gas aren't going to be here forever," Johnson said during the ground-breaking event. "By bringing an industrial park to our community, we help to provide other jobs outside of what is normally here."

The goal of the project is to allow the community to grow while providing employment options for people who want to stay in the Four Corners.

Although the new industrial park project may have taken a few years longer than most wanted, it's a new tool to assist in building a secure economic future.

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