

Rep. Lujan visits Tucumcari

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By Thomas Garcia
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Area residents met with Rep. Ben Ray Luján on Tuesday at his office in Tucumcari to speak about their concerns and issues that affect the area.

"I am doing my best to reach out to the communities," Lujan said. "I want to be available to my constituents. Holding office hours gives people a chance to come in and speak with me."

Lujan said traveling to an office in Santa Fe or Washington, D.C., is not an option many of his constituents have.



"I try to travel to each of my offices across the state," Lujan said. "It is all about addressing the public and their concerns."

Lujan represents New Mexico's 3rd Congressional District, which includes Quay, Curry, Roosevelt, Harding, Union and San Miquel counties.

Members of city, hospital and county agencies met with Lujan.

"One of the major concerns was the allocation of water and the equipment to maintain waterways," Lujan said. "This is something that is very important to area growers."

Arch Hurley manager Franklin McCasland met with Lujan to discuss those water issues.

"It was very productive to met with Rep. Lujan," McCasland said. "I along with many others are pleased he has an office here in Tucumcari. It gives us an opportunity to express our concerns."

McCasland said it is great that Lujan takes time to hold office hours to met and speak with the people.

"This is the first time in many years that a congressman has held an office here in Tucumcari," McCasland said.

Lujan said the current state of the economy is always on the top of the list of topics of discussion.

"We want to hear from people what we can do to raise opportunities in the area," Lujan said.

Lujan began his day in Tucumcari by speaking at a breakfast program and then attending a government class at Tucumcari High School.

"I think it is great that our youth is learning about government and how it works," Lujan said.

Lujan also visited Mesalands Community College and took a tour of the construction of the North American Wind Research and Training Center, which is under way.

"I am currently working on a \$100 million authorization that will help community colleges with energy programs like the one here at Mesalands," Lujan said. "The thought is to have half of the money go towards developing new programs. The other half will be used for the expansion or continued funding of existing programs."

Lujan manned the office for several hours in the afternoon so people would have an opportunity to speak with him.

"This is Rep. Lujan's second time to hold office hours in Tucumcari, and it went very well," said Ron Wilmont, Tucumcari field representative.