

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent  
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Rhonda Quintana, co-owner of Quintana's Music and Indian Jewelry, has been named the *Sun's* Person of the Month for January 2019.

This is in part to her recently being selected as the new coordinator for the city's monthly ArtsCrawl event, which draws in hundreds of visitors to downtown Gallup.

"There has been a very big community response to [the future of] ArtsCrawl," Quintana said in an interview Jan. 11, adding that locals were upset it could end.

Quintana sees ArtsCrawl as an attempt to improve quality of life in Gallup, with live musical performances, opportunities for families and friends to get together, and a chance to give local artists a platform to share their creations.

### HER BACKGROUND

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The decision to put her name in for coordinator is built on a history of entertainment and event planning.

Quintana, a Gallup native, studied music at the Music Institute in Hollywood, Calif., and is a 2000 recipient of the Best Blues Production award from the New Mexico Music Association.

She also was the CEO of an Arizona-based entertainment company that managed bands, promoted shows, conducted production and live recordings, and worked with booking agencies, some of which performed at Gallup's El Morro Theatre.

In addition, she has produced radio commercials, interviewed a number of personalities in various industries, and has experience seeking out sponsorships.

She has worked in these fields, along with her husband, Ryan Quintana. The two opened the original Quintana's Music at 200 W. Coal Ave., which closed in 2010 but was relaunched at its current location 223 W. Coal Ave. in 2016.

"The goal is to really bring more excitement for downtown," Ryan said, when asked how he felt about the new challenge ahead of him and Rhonda.

### **TAKING CHARGE**

Quintana was approached by Francis Bee of Gallup B.I.D. in November. She met with the GallupARTS board about the position later that month. She was officially announced as the coordinator on Dec. 21.

She said that she went ahead with her nomination feeling capable and passionate about ArtsCrawl. Once the events board reviewed her resume, the decision to elect her the new coordinator was almost unanimous.

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“The main goal has always been supporting the community,” Quintana said. “What better way to do that than to support this event?”

### THE COMMUNITY RESPONSE

When asked how locals have responded to the news of her taking over as coordinator, Quintana said that the reception has been very warm, saying that the announcement post got over 600 likes on Facebook.

While there is plenty of support for the event, Quintana did say that there would always be naysayers to ArtsCrawl, specifically about how street regulations are not always enforced as well as they should be. Yet, she said that she thinks the board will be able to address their concerns because this is ultimately a community event.

“A local person knows what ArtsCrawl means for the community,” Quintana said. “They have come up and congratulated me in some stores. It’s very humbling.”

Ryan also called the community support fabulous, saying that people are aware of what they want to do for ArtsCrawl and that they are very positive.

One person who is eager to see what Quintana will do is Rose Eason, of GallupARTS and the former coordinator for ArtsCrawl.

“Rhonda has a lot of enthusiasm, passion and drive, which are the qualities the ArtsCrawl Coordinator needs to be successful,” Eason said in a written statement Jan. 16. “We’re all very excited to see where she takes the event this year!”

### CHANGES TO ARTSCRAWL

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When asked about her vision for ArtsCrawl, Quintana said that the intent is to not make drastic changes, but to keep the current formula in place. The philosophy is that they are not going to fix something that is not broken.

Another goal is to increase the opportunities for performance arts, especially for kids, Quintana said. This includes dance teams, theatre performances, and crafting.

“The artists know we’re here for them,” Quintana said. “And it’s also good for Gallup because the money made [during ArtsCrawl] stays in the community.”

She added that around 1,100 people attend ArtsCrawl on average each month, and another goal will be to increase that number. She aims to get other locals and tourists to join in the festivities and get the event to grow up towards the area near the McKinley County Courthouse.

Ultimately, Quintana believes that ArtsCrawl will bring both local store owners and city leaders together.

A positive community event like ArtsCrawl has the potential to remove the negative stigmas around Gallup, she added. Most notably, the moniker of “drunktown” could be dispelled when visitors to Gallup see the number of people enjoying themselves downtown during ArtsCrawl, Quintana suggested.

“I believe if everybody can be flexible, and that they make their voices heard, the problems will be solved,” she said.

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