

Louis Bonaguidi pulls off an upset

Written by By Cody Begaye Sun Correspondent
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41 votes made the difference

Louis Bonaguidi's supporters took the Gallup mayoral runoff seriously.

In a turnaround from the March 3 Regular Municipal Election where Chioda claimed 1,347 votes while Bonaguidi finished second with 987 votes, Bonaguidi's supporters took their second chance to elect their man March 31 and defeated his opponent Sammy Chioda, who had 1,034 votes. It was a narrow margin, but Bonaguidi slipped by with 1,075 votes.

Early and absentee voting played a substantial role in Bonaguidi's victory, bringing him 550 votes to Chioda's 495.

Bonaguidi spoke with the *Sun* early April 1 to give his reaction to the results.

"I was surprised [by the results], because I knew the person I was running against was very popular and well known," Bonaguidi said. "In that sense, I was surprised I did win."

He credits the strong committee of people he worked with throughout the election cycle.

As his first move after being elected, Bonaguidi said he aims to visit each department head in the City of Gallup to get to know them.

"There's so many departments, so many personalities in them," he said. "I'm acquainted with some of them, so [meeting them] will be my first step."

After that will be budget hearings, which Bonaguidi said are going to be difficult, due to the impact COVID-19 has had on local businesses and the fact that no one knows for sure how long closures will last.

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Still, Bonaguidi said he is grateful for the people who voted for him and thinks Gallup is a great community with great people.

“I promise I’ll do the best I can not just for the people who voted for me, but for the whole community,” he said.

Bonaguidi will not take office until May 1. City Manager Maryann Ustick says that because of the changes in Local Election Act, which went into effect July 1, 2018, the current mayor will remain in office through April 30. The new mayor will be sworn in shortly before May 1.

By Cody Begaye
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