

Meet Matt Robinson – Gallup’s new tourism manager

Written by By Dee Velasco For the Sun
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Eager to see what Gallup is all about, the *Sun* had the opportunity to sit with Matt Robinson, the new city Tourism and Marketing Manager as to get his point of view as a fresh face to the area.

Born and raised in southern New Mexico right in Deming, Robinson is no stranger to the rich unique culture that New Mexico is known for, and what better place to find it — than here in Gallup. At his office at city hall, Robinson welcomed the *Sun* and right off the bat Robinson stated that he welcomes everyone to his office as he likes to meet new faces.

Q: What drew you to this job?

I like meeting new people and this area of course is different and has a lot to offer. Not only with the community, but outside as well. There's a vast richness to the area and not that many people know that. I want to make the community better, and I see that as very rewarding. I like working for government programs, writing grants, so with that said, I would like to find more effective government programs to make Gallup even better.

Q: What are you hoping to accomplish in this new role?

I would like to be a part of the community, to function with the community, and work for them/build for them. I hope to bring in more people, because there is nothing like Gallup. The vivid southwest, the feeling here is so diverse and everyone should experience it; it's like a hidden secret that everyone should know about.

Q: What are you most looking forward to when it comes to this role?

Meeting new people, such as yourself, whether it be one on one just like this, groups ... just getting to know more people is always the fun part in any job. It's always nice to hear from different voices and what they bring to the table, as well as letting them express what they know about their own community is vital and important. Who better to ask than those who know the area, the challenges, the positive side, and of course the need to make Gallup better.

Q: What do you think is going to be the hardest part about this role?

It might be the growth of what it is here — the assets, feel back from the community, my ideas and how to implement that all into what is already here. I would like to come up with something where you can access different things so easily about Gallup. Easy bases, options at your fingertips.

Take the Red Rock Balloon rally, that was an incredible event despite the weather not cooperating. Right now, I'm just in the learning, observing phase right now. I just want to get a feel of Gallup with all that makes it what it is. The Inter-Tribal Ceremonial could be on the world stage, I would love to help with that and market it as Gallup's world stop. I recently heard that people came from Norway because of a short promotional video they saw. Now if we can only harvest that and build upon it, who knows what else can happen here in Gallup.

Q: Now on a lighter side (both laughing), let's talk about family, tell me about them, as well as more about yourself?

I have a beautiful wife and two kids ... we were high school sweethearts. I'm originally from Deming, I used to live in Kirtland for a while. I'm currently going to college at San Juan College in Farmington, and will be graduating with my degree in Business Administration and will be carrying that over to the University of New Mexico here at the Gallup branch.

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Q: What do you like most about Gallup so far?

I like the people, they’ve given me a warm reception, and as I mentioned before ... the diversity of the people and [I am] just happy to see someone like me come in.

Q: What other jobs did you have before this?

Oh my, I’ve worked different jobs, such as at San Juan college. I was a legal assistant for some time. I was a Public Information Officer; I was a reporter/photographer for a small newspaper in Deming.

Q: Do you feel like those jobs prepared you for this new role?

Yes, I believe they did, each one had a purpose that I see a common thread through it all. None was a job in vain that it didn’t contribute any life skill to what I can apply here. I’m thankful for each of them, it’s always great learning new crafts and seeing what you are capable of doing. Such as learning about economic development and writing grants, where it will benefit me here. You just never know when things you learned are going to prepare you; learning different things is always great and never a waste.

Before ending the interview, Robinson graciously extended this thanks to the community. “I would like to extend to the community that I have an open-door policy, come in and talk to me about anything — literally because I’m here to work for the people and build for the people. I’m here and excited to get my feet wet and immerse myself into all that Gallup has to offer to better the community.”

Matt Robinson can be reached at (505) 863-1227.

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