

Does Gallup need trash officers?

Written by By Bernie Dotson
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Hopefully, the premise of having an annual cleanup day around Gallup will seem unnecessary in due time.

Perhaps eventually all of the folks around town will take the matters of public quality of life and personal responsibility a little more seriously. But unfortunately, all too often there exists a small portion of people that weren't reared to believe that no one else wants to pick up trash after them. But how do you tell somebody what they should've learned as a child?

Frequently, the alleyways throughout Gallup's downtown are full of trash and debris. It's definitely a sight for sore eyes and not something tourists to see. Some of the downtown business owners honestly throw their trash inside of dumpsters, but there are some who don't. Then there are the dumpster divers that look through trash to get things like aluminum cans, clothing and food and whatever else they can get, including a comfortable place to sleep. When this happens the dumpster divers leave trash scattered over the alleyway and then they just go on about their normal daily routine.

Who's responsible for picking up the pieces? As some people like to say when they spot a person who is unclean and doesn't appear to care about how things look, "I'm not your mama."

We applaud all of the people who go behind others and make an effort to keep Gallup clean and beautiful. And we certainly applaud the folks like those at Comcast Cable who spend an average of \$3,000 yearly to get volunteers together to clean up parts of the Indian Capital. Comcast will be out April 30th around Gallup's downtown to do just that yet for another year.

Ultimately, though, the efforts of Comcast are short-term fixes to what appears to be a much greater problem. The city and county must put some teeth in public littering laws in public places such as downtown, and maybe install security cameras to catch the fools who continue to toss and scatter trash as if no one is looking or cares.

Maybe the city of Gallup and McKinley County should think about hiring a full-time trash enforcement officer, you know, a sort of police officer who does nothing but enforce litter laws. The down side of that idea is just how much authority would a trash chief have and would the

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taxpaying public take this person with any degree of seriousness?

For most law-abiding and taxpaying citizens, it's frustrating and difficult to fathom how someone can simply disregard their own property or that of others' by not keeping trash and debris in its proper place.

Only with much tougher consequences and more serious enforcement can Gallup and McKinley County turn this area's dirty knuckleheads into clean citizens.

By Bernie Dotson