





## Event is like rolling thunder

The hardest thing isn’t the noise. It isn’t the motorcycles. Rather, it’s making sure that riders have what they need when they get to Gallup.

“It was a wonderful event,” Sandra McKinney, the wife of the city’s mayor and an organizer of the annual Run for The Wall, said. “We received a lot of compliments about how orderly everything was.”

An estimated 300-plus motorcycles and riders rocked and rolled through Gallup and at nearby Red Rock Park, May 18, where they stopped to pay homage to the men and women in uniform who have served the country May 19 and 20. Run For The Wall is a cross-country motorcycle venture whereby thousands of bikers ride from Ontario, Calif., to the Monument grounds in Washington, D.C.

Guy Young, 45, of Phoenix said this was his first time joining the event. He said it was hot weather driving and catching up with the group in Gallup from central Arizona, but worth it.

“I was in the U.S. Marines for 21 years and six months and two days,” Young said. “This is giving something back to all of the people who fought and never came back. This is giving something back to everybody who served.”

Young spoke about the tremendous amount of gratitude from onlookers along the route in cities he’d never been to. He said people, “strangers,” Young said, frequently hold up American flags and give the thumbs up sign along the ride route.

Barigno Paramore, 59, from Seattle, Wash., said he’s been participating in Run For The Wall for the past three years. He said there are a lot of riders who look forward to stopping in Gallup. The entire cross-country trek constitutes a 3,000-mile route and can get very hot.

“This might be one of the better stops,” Paramore said. “There are scheduled events and a lot of times free food and discounted hotel rates.”

Gallup Mayor Jackie McKinney has been participating in the event for two decades and has assisted the city in hosting the riders since 2000.

“Gallup is a fantastic stop for the folks in the ride,” McKinney said at this week’s city council meeting. “It truly is a great event.”

“It’s just a great event,” Gallup Councilor Linda Garcia said. ‘It’s like a holy site with a lot of people teary-eyed at the veterans.”

***By Bernie Dotson***
***Sun Correspondent***