

## Gallup Express: The Indian Capital's 'mobile manager'

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 05 February 2016 04:20

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Gallup Express Ridership		
2015	Gallup	Zuni
January	3963	3802
February	4091	3550
March	4916	3784
April	4930	3242
May	5068	3189
June	5929	2684
July	5814	3028
August	6382	3885
September	5468	3858
October	5960	3651
November	4293	2766
December	4535	2932
Total	61349	40371
Combined total	101,720	

**GALLUP** – The notion of existing as a typical “bus company” doesn’t sit very well with the new executive director at Gallup Express. That’s because Tommy Mims, hired into the job last year, wants the riding public to think of the company as a “mobile manager.”

Mims, a Gallup native and graduate of Gallup Catholic High School, replaces Matthew Ortiz. Ortiz worked at the company for a little more than six years.

“I think every company or business should be about customer service and treating the client the

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right way," Mims said Monday from the main office of Gallup Express along Warehouse Lane. "That's what we do. We're not just public transportation. We care about customers and what they experience."

Mims said since starting the job Sept. 28 that "things have been going smoothly." He said the fleet of nine AeroStar and AeroLight 12-seater blue vans shuttle riders throughout Gallup and to the Pueblo of Zuni several times a day on \$1 and \$3 fares.

There are 10 full-time employees at Gallup Express and a couple of part-timers. The service recorded 61,321 Gallup riders in fiscal 2105 and 40,159 for Zuni.

"What I like about it (the job) the most is the customer service that you do everyday," Mims said. "My job background includes interacting with people a lot. I feel really good about that part of the job and how that fits in here at (Gallup Express)."

### **No stranger to public service**

Mims noted that prior to taking the job at Gallup Express he worked in customer service positions at a national hotel chain in Phoenix, Ariz., and Long Beach and Sacramento in the state of California. Alice Perez, the executive director at the Jim Harlin Community Pantry on Hasler Valley Road, which oversees operations at Gallup Express, said the public is pleased with the job being done by Mims.

"He was hired from the outside and is doing well," Perez said. "Nobody from the inside applied, but the job was open for them to do so."

Created in 2006, Gallup Express receives about \$700,000 annually from the New Mexico Department of Transportation and \$85,000 from the city of Gallup and \$35,000 from McKinley County.

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Riders like the service provided by Gallup Express.

"It's always on time and it's very clean," Maria Yates, 40, said. Yates lives on the north side of Gallup. "I always get to work on time for my two jobs downtown."

Mims said some of the things he's thinking about for the future are increasing the vehicle fleet and expanding route coverage to the north of Gallup to Gamerco and throughout the city's west end.

"There are people in those areas who have to come to Gallup for court dates and doctor appointments," Mims said. "It makes sense to expand to those areas. Those are some things that I'd like to accomplish in 2016."

Gallup Express bus service runs from 6:45 am - 6 pm, Monday - Friday.