

Thunderbird Supply Company calendar adds its first male model

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Models from Thailand to the Continental Divide

Known for its beautiful Native American jewelry, Thunderbird Supply Company is also known for the models who represent them on the pages of their unique calendar. Models chosen to represent Thunderbird Supply Company also make appearances at the Gathering of Nations powwow and the WildThing Championship Bullriding.

With the arrival of the new year, the calendar will showcase seven models. Past calendars had six.

Fans had the opportunity to meet and greet the 2020 models at the company's store in Gallup Dec. 7. Autographed posters of the new calendar signed by the models were handed out.

Thunderbird CEO Danny Thomason said the promotion has only been in existence for a few years, but it's a major undertaking.

"We don't have any restrictions on what certain nationality you can be: Hopi, Mexican-American, Anglo. Each year is always different and always a challenge. We had over 200 audition and

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have 8 people that make the selection. And it's a hard decision to make," he said.

Thomason says the deciding factor is not based on appearance alone. There is a process that models go through and personality is an important part of the choice.

"They're representing Thunderbird Supply. So we want individuals ready to meet and greet and represent us. That's one of things we look for," he said.

The search for models takes place beginning in June and continues until December. Each model has to appear to hand out promotional items at three big events: the company's breakout of the new calendar, the Gathering of Nations powwow, and the Wild Thing Bullriding Championship.

"The models in the past love[d] it, and it's fun for them." Thomason said.

Thunderbird began the calendar in 2015 and Thomason believes it's the best gig there is for any aspiring model.

"When they get picked, they get an appearance fee. If travel is needed, they get paid for that, and basically we spoil them," he said. "We feed them. When we do the photo shoot, we provide the clothing. We have someone who does their makeup, and it's really a good gig to be honest with you, here in the Southwest."

New to this year's calendar is the first male model, Jason S. He is a Utah resident who works as a lawyer for the Navajo Nation. He says being a model is a confidence booster for him.

"A few people commented that I should try out for it. It's more of a a self-confidence thing and being happy how you look," S. said.

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Another first-time Thunderbird model is Manthana Y. Originally from Thailand, now settled in Albuquerque, Y. saw an advertisement and thought she would try it out.

“They told me to try it and I was picked, and it has made me better in trying to mourn the passing away of my dad, who passed away a few months ago,” she said.

Stephanie J. of Continental Divide who is no stranger to the modeling search, has been auditioning for the past two years. Excited that she finally made it, she said she’s thrilled to be a part of this great event.

“This year I made it and it’s a new experience,” J. said. “It makes me happy, and it’s fun.”

At the request of Thunderbird Supply Company, models’ last names are excluded from this story.

For more information: thunderbirdsupply.com

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