

Gallup Ceremonial is 'Buckin' Back'

Written by By Holly J. Wagner Sun Correspondent
Friday, 23 July 2021 04:31



2021 Ceremonial Embraces Tradition, Adds Virtual Dimension

The 99th Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial will have a very different look from previous years, reemerging from the COVID-19 pandemic as a hybrid event with live and virtual elements.

Details are still being finalized for some parts of the two-track event. The local Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial Association is handling live events, coming out of the chute Aug. 12 with rodeo events themed, 'We're Buckin' Back,' a wine tasting, the juried art show and exhibit hall through Aug. 15 at Red Rock Park.

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The State of New Mexico Intertribal Ceremonial Office will manage virtual and filmed elements the following week.

New this year is a one-hour TV special, "Spirit of the Ceremonial," that will air statewide on NBC affiliate KOB at 9 pm Aug. 19. The production will feature the history, origins, evolution of various events and interviews with people remembering past ceremonials, State Office Director Melissa Sanchez said.

"We're going to reach an audience that will not only have members who have attended or heard of the Ceremonial, we will reach a new audience and entice them to come to the 100th," she said. The state office's marketing team will also excerpt the show and use clips to promote future events, Gallup Tourism and Marketing Manager Jennifer Lazarz said.

The city will host a watch party at the El Morro Theatre from 7 pm on air night, combining the party with the second show in Gallup Main Street's summer concert series. "There will be indigenous hosts and complementary acts to the main act that night," Lazarz said. "Since the television premiere of the special is on a Thursday night, we thought it would be a great opportunity to marry those two things," she added, noting the concert is open to the public at the theatre and will be live-streamed online.

During the rodeo and live exhibits, vendor space will be available in and outside of the exhibit hall so artisans and traders can sell their wares. Show hours will be 10 am to 10 pm Aug. 12 to coincide with the wine tasting; 10 am to 8 pm Aug. 13 and Aug. 14; and 10 am to 2 pm Aug. 15. Admission to the live events will be \$10 per adult; parking will cost \$5 per car.

Volunteers are being recruited to work shifts at the art show Aug. 8 - Aug. 15 to help with setup, check-in, sales, judging paperwork, ribbon placement and show breakdown, board member and Exhibit Coordinator Joyce Graves said.

"I know there is some confusion this year, but I really want artists especially, and traders to know we are still here. We are doing the art show and we want them to come out," she said.

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What attendees won't see on site is the Miss Gallup Intertribal Ceremonial Queen Pageant. The state Office will produce that as a mainly virtual event, along with a Virtual Artisan Market Aug. 15 - Aug. 22 along with prerecorded videos of traditional dances. Following last year's pandemic-driven cancellation, state organizers decided it would be safer to minimize the face-to-face activities in favor of virtual presentations.

The Virtual Artisan Market will be open to all Native American artisans to promote their work and their own online stores. The fee is \$150 and artisans must sign up by July 30. The state's team and New Mexico Tourism Department will promote the market on TV, newspaper, radio, and in social media, Sanchez said.

The Ceremonial culminates with a pageant luncheon and speaking competition Aug. 20 and the crowning event at the El Morro Theatre Aug. 21.

Tracking all of this may be a little tricky this year: The local and state organizations received \$25,000 each from the city to market the Ceremonial. Each has its own website and Facebook presence. At press time, the ceremonial office at 206 Coal Ave. is closed for repairs and updating, but expected to be open in August, Sanchez said. The Association's website hadn't been updated since last year, but organizers promise it will be soon.

Part of the issue has been the short timeline for planning and getting sponsors and volunteers on board. Uncertainty about reopening dates and state restrictions on gatherings added an extra challenge for organizers this year, especially drumming up sponsors, Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial Association Board President Kyle Tom said.

"The ones we've had in the past few years have been amazing," he said. "We understand they've had a rough time in the past 18 months.

"For them to donate some of the big dollars that they did in 2019 might not be feasible now," he continued. "If they can do half or a quarter of that, we are so thankful."

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Budget permitting, the association may try to add a pow wow and live dances, Tom said. Either way, he’s optimistic that the ceremonial will go well.

“The way I see it is like healing,” Tom said. “We took so much for granted before 2020.

“People thought, ‘the Ceremonial will always be there — it’s the same thing. I don’t want to go.’ Now it’s like, ‘I can’t wait, I’ve missed it.’

“People missed it and want to get back to some kind of normal,” he said.

Information

Live events:

<https://gallupceremonial.com/home>

(505) 863-3986

Virtual events:

<https://www.gallupintertribalceremonial.com>

(505) 259-2202

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