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El Morro Theatre manager moves up the ranks

Jennifer Lazarz, the manager of the El Morro Theatre, has been hired as Gallup's tourism and marketing manager, city officials confirmed. Gallup Deputy City Clerk Alicia Palacios said Lazarz, a native of Illinois, was recently confirmed for the tourism job.

Klo Abeita, the city's human resources director, said the city won't be looking to hire a new theatre manager as the position is now under the umbrella of the tourism and marketing manager.

"Lazarz will continue to oversee the the El Morro Theatre as well as the (Rex) museum," Abeita said.

As theatre manager, Lazarz earned \$46,000 a year, but in her new position, effective Dec. 19, her annaul salary increased to \$65,520.

The city conducted its search for a tourism manager over a six-month period, Palacios said. In her new role, Lazarz reports to City Manager Maryann Ustick.

"I am very pleased to have Jennifer Lazarz as our new tourism and marketing manager," Ustick said in an email. "She is energetic, creative and dedicated to innovative branding and marketing that will not only domestically, but internationally highlight Gallup."

Ustick said Lazarz will also oversee the Second Street Events Center, adjacent to the El Morro Theatre. Overall, the position is key to supporting and marketing city-owned historic buildings and venues. In addition, she will also oversee the city's tourism-related marketing, advertising, promotions, and social media.

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“Jennifer Lazarz is passionate about the people of Gallup and its high potential as a destination for guests from around the world,” Ustick said. “She has worked in the theatre for 10 years as an opera singer, ran her own business as a professional singer and voice teacher, and brings eight years of arts administration experience to Gallup. She has been an extensive traveler with trips to Austria and China, and trips all over Europe and the United States. Her combined love for Gallup and travel made her the ideal candidate for the position.”

Lazarz was enthused to have been chosen for the job.

“I am honored and thrilled to be able to serve the Gallup community in a greater capacity,” Lazarz said. “Our tourism brand, Gallup.Real.True, rings personally for me as someone who moved here from the opposite side of the country. The people and experiences in Gallup are as real and authentic as it gets. I love living in a community with so much to do and see and the most amazing people around. I am excited to work hard to show the world what I fell in love with when I moved here.”

Lazarz possesses an undergraduate degree from Augustana College in Illinois and a master’s degree from the University of North Carolina.

In the theatre manager job, Lazarz earned the yearly salary plus a living stipend that allows an apartment at the El Morro Theatre. She replaces Catherine Sebold who earned \$63,000 a year as city tourism and marketing manager.

The El Morro Theatre, located on Coal Avenue in downtown Gallup, has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1988.

***By Bernie Dotson
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