

## 2023 brings all sorts of changes to ArtsCrawl

Written by By Holly J. Wagner Sun Correspondent  
Friday, 14 April 2023 03:28

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Gallup's summer ArtsCrawls are a beloved tradition, and this year it will have a few new elements to surprise and delight visitors.

City leaders will officially cut the ribbon on the newly finished Coal Avenue Commons, a two-year transformation of a core downtown arts and tourism district, at 6:30 pm April 8.

Visitors will find the area more pedestrian-friendly, with new sidewalks, benches and traffic lights that let pedestrians cross intersections diagonally as well as laterally.

"It's a little different this time because the construction last year needed a little extra coordinating," ArtsCrawl Coordinator Dee Santillanes said.

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Years in the making, Coal Avenue Commons partnered with the City of Gallup, GallupARTS, Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, Gallup Business Improvement District and Gallup Main Street Arts and Cultural District to design the enhancements.

At 7 pm the Crawl picks up the pace, with galleries opening their doors, outdoor vendors and entertainment around the Commons (Coal Avenue between First Street and Third Street) and a new attraction this year: Tiny Art meant to amuse visitors with creative solutions for formerly unsightly blemishes in the downtown landscape.

Throughout the evening, ART123 Gallery will host a scavenger hunt to unveil the Tiny Art project, which showcases the work of local artists. Scavengers will start and end their search at the gallery, and prizes await those who find all six installations.

“I enjoy that they add this little bit of glimmer downtown,” Santillanes said about the Tiny Art. “It adds that little bit of sparkle in all these little places where you say, ‘Wow, look at that little piece.’ It’s a great little project.”

GallupARTS will host Family Craft nights at El Morro Events Center during each ArtsCrawl, which will continue every second Saturday night of the month throughout the summer and possibly as late as November, weather permitting. April’s theme is “Peek-A-Boo Spring.”

ART123 will also continue its tradition of featuring a different local artist each month over the summer. A year after his show shined a light on homelessness, Pueblo Pintado artist Armand Antonio returns with “One Time For Old Times,” a tribute to Diné ranchers, in the Loom Gallery.

The date will also kick off the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Arts Show, with GallupARTS showing more than 170 artworks by 200 K-12 students representing 14 schools across McKinley County.

Santillanes plans for each month’s event to have a different theme, some aligned with holidays happening that month and others that will do double duty as attractions that promote local

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events like the Gallup Intertribal Indian Ceremonial and car shows.

Her one request of the community is that people cooperate with the event by not parking on the Commons streets after 3 pm. Officials will start moving vehicles off the street at 5 pm. Santillanes asks that folks park in nearby parking lots instead.

Like many in the community, she's ready to welcome warmer weather and the wave of visitors.

"I don't need to tell the community what they already know about ArtsCrawl," Santillanes said. "Arts is the main scope of the event, but community is also a big part of ArtsCrawl. We all come together. It's like our Chaco Canyon."

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