

More shade, shorter restroom lines coming for Red Rock visitors

Written by By Holly J. Wagner Sun Correspondent
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For any woman who's ever had to wait in a long line to use the restroom at a local rodeo event, some relief is on the way.

The first part of a project to replace the 1970s restrooms at Red Rock Park is under way. The "main" restroom on the west side of the arena is expected to be finished in time for most summer events.

Besides being shiny, modern and new, a major component of the renovations is changing the balance of stalls, which has favored men, so there are more stalls available for women.

The west arena men's room had seven urinals, four standard stalls and one stall with disabled access; the women's room had six standard stalls and one accessible stall. In the new facility, the men's will have 10 urinals, two standard and one accessible stall; the ladies' will have 16 standard and two accessible stalls.

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McKinley County took over park operations from the City of Gallup in August 2022 and has since demolished the uninhabitable dancers' quarters, replaced multiple roofs and replaced the climate system in the exhibit hall, where the kitchen was also being renovated. Restrooms are the next step in a long process.

"This is the first time in 50 years anything has been done on that park," Mayor Louie Bonaguidi said. "Potty parity wasn't part of [design] in 1973."

The county initially planned to do all of the park's restrooms at once, but bids came in double the expected amount, County Manager Anthony Dimas said. Instead, they went ahead with the largest restroom with a goal of having it open in late May, and will continue with others as funding allows.

The extra restrooms should be done in time for Wild Thing in June and the 102nd Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial Aug. 2-11, Dimas said.

"Best of the Best will have to get by with Porta Potties until they get the facility built," Bonaguidi said.

The improvement will benefit attendees the most, as many of the rodeo contestants arrive in motorhomes that have their own restrooms.

Also in the works is a shelter for the south side of the arena. The present situation leaves many spectators sitting in the sun for much of the day; the new setup will let them enjoy events from under cover.

If everything works out exactly right, the shade might be in by late summer, Dimas said, noting that supply chain issues have put drag on some other projects.

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