

## Gallup selects new Police Chief

Written by gallupsun  
Friday, 28 April 2023 13:41

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Erin Toadlena-Pablo has been selected as the Chief of the Gallup Police Department and is the first woman to serve in the post.

She will take the reins May 2 and is excited to continue the unique community outreach model to which her department is committed. Mayor Louis Bonaguidi and City of Gallup officials invite the public to attend her swearing-in ceremony, slated for 11 am on May 2 at El Morro Theater, 207 W. Coal Ave.

Toadlena-Pablo-Pablo began her career in 2001 as a rookie officer whose work was akin to the Public Service Officers now employed by the GPD. She served in the Patrol and Investigation divisions, Internal Affairs, as a school resource officer, in the Bike Patrol and Emergency Response Team and was promoted to Captain before her eventual appointment to Acting Chief following the retirement of Chief Franklin Boyd in January.

“I will be chief of police, but I’m only as strong as the weakest person here,” Toadlena-Pablo said in a press release published April 27. “I will work every day to support my officers and their vital service to the community.”

Community involvement and creative approaches to tough problems drive the department’s work. Toadlena-Pablo feels “humanizing the badge” is an effective approach to being proactive in addressing crime. She points to the department’s work of diverting people away from the criminal justice system and into programs to provide them with support and resources, such as the work done through the city’s behavioral health programs.

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“We’re not just here because someone is in trouble; we’re here because we genuinely want to help,” she said, referring to situations where she and other officers approach people directly to offer support. “Is the justice system the only way to help? It’s not. We’re trying to be creative.”

Staffing is one of her top priorities in the new position. The department currently has 14 vacancies, most of which are patrol officer positions. Her other priorities include crime reduction and narcotics. She also has a prominent focus on missing persons around the region, which is supported by multi-agency collaboration efforts.

Throughout Toadlena-Pablo's career, she has watched the department and community grow from having “very limited services” to now having more accessible and comprehensive programs to address substance abuse and mental health issues. Collaborating with community programs helps her officers get to the “root cause” of issues and provide support to overcome those obstacles.

“Why are they in this situation? Maybe they lost their job or are homeless,” she said. “We’re able to help them and get them back on their feet.”

Toadlena-Pablo described how one patrol shift was comprised of officers who did not have children, yet they worked with a local store to understand what size diapers to purchase for young children they encountered during work. Officers often “have to act like a social worker or caretaker,” she added.

Going above and beyond the traditional duties of police work puts a strain on officers and their families, she said, and they often do not realize they are dealing with trauma from what they see daily. She thanked and acknowledged her staff for their “amazing work.”

She is married to Jonathan Pablo, and they have six children: Josh, Kobe, Kiana, Kymberly, Emily and Jayace. She is Diné and from Sawmill, Az. She holds a Criminal Justice degree from the University of New Mexico – Gallup.

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