



# VILLAGE NEWS



Small Community • Big Possibilities

Volume 27 - Number 9 - September 2023

## VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR RECEIVES AWARD

Village Administrator Gregory D. Martin has received the 2023 Excellence in Government Award in New Mexico from Leadership New Mexico.

Martin has been Village administrator since April 2012.

Before moving to New Mexico, Martin held positions in various local governments including city manager at St. Johns, Arizona; assistant town manager of Strasburg, Virginia; and assistant city manager of Monticello, Utah.

Martin began his management career as an intern with the city manager's office in Greenville, Texas; followed by another internship with the county manager's office in Johnson County (Olathe) Kansas; and as a management analyst with the City of Houston, Texas.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish translation and a masters degree in public administration from Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

He has been a credentialed manager (ICMA-CM) with the International City/County Management Association since April 2016, of which he has been a member since 2000.

He has been a member of the New Mexico City Management Association (NMCMA), a subsection of the New Mexico Municipal League since 2012, serving as its president from 2021 to 2022.

He is a 2015 graduate of Leadership New Mexico's Local Government Leadership Program and a 2023 graduate of Leadership New Mexico's Core Program.

In addition to his role as village administrator, Martin also serves as clerk/treasurer of Los Lunas, is a member of the board of directors of the Valencia County Regional Emergency Communications Center (VRECC or E-911 Regional Dispatch Center), and is an active member of the Rotary Club of Los Lunas.

Martin enjoys spending time with his cherished family, reading, traveling, playing sports, and participating in games and activities.

Leadership New Mexico was founded in 1995 to identify current and emerging leaders throughout New Mexico, enhance their leadership skills, and deepen their knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing our state.

Leadership New Mexico is dedicated to the development of informed leaders who understand issues, define problems, develop solutions, and achieve positions of higher responsibility in New Mexico.



**CHARLES GRIEGO**  
MAYOR

[griegoc@loslunasnm.gov](mailto:griegoc@loslunasnm.gov)

**GINO M. ROMERO**  
VILLAGE COUNCILOR

[romerog@loslunasnm.gov](mailto:romerog@loslunasnm.gov)

**FRANK LUCERO**  
POLICE CHIEF

[flucero@loslunasnm.gov](mailto:flucero@loslunasnm.gov)

**DR. JAMES RUNYON**  
VILLAGE COUNCILOR

[runyonj@loslunasnm.gov](mailto:runyonj@loslunasnm.gov)

**CRUZ MUÑOZ**  
VILLAGE COUNCILOR

[munozc@loslunasnm.gov](mailto:munozc@loslunasnm.gov)

**JOHN GABALDON**  
FIRE CHIEF

[jgabaldon@loslunasnm.gov](mailto:jgabaldon@loslunasnm.gov)

**CHRISTOPHER S. ORTIZ**  
VILLAGE COUNCILOR

[ortizc@loslunasnm.gov](mailto:ortizc@loslunasnm.gov)

**AVILIO CHAVEZ**  
MUNICIPAL JUDGE

[avchavez@loslunasnm.gov](mailto:avchavez@loslunasnm.gov)

**GREGORY D. MARTIN**  
VILLAGE ADMINISTRATOR

[marting@loslunasnm.gov](mailto:marting@loslunasnm.gov)

## NOVEMBER 2023 VILLAGE ELECTION CANDIDATES

Registered voters in the Village limits of the Village of Los Lunas may vote for mayor and municipal judge in the November 7, 2023 election.

Registered voters in Village Council Districts Two and Four will also be able to vote for council candidates.

Candidates for Mayor are Charles Griego and Alonzo Baldonado.

Council District Two candidate is Gino Romero while Council District Four candidate is James Runyon.

Municipal Judge candidates are Mark Aguilar and Avilio Chavez.

Voters may vote November 7, 2023, Election Day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., absentee or early.

On January 10, 2019, the Village adopted Ordinance 442 to Opt In to the Regular Local Election, which moved regular Village elections to November of odd-numbered years, and put the Valencia County Bureau of Elections in charge of carrying them out.

Contact the Valencia County Bureau of Elections at 505 866-2080 for more information, or [www.co.valencia.nm.us](http://www.co.valencia.nm.us).

## A HALLOWEEN BASH!

The Village of Los Lunas Parks and Recreation Department Presents A Halloween Bash on October 27 and 31, 2023, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Los Lunas Transportation Center, 101 Courthouse Road.

Join your favorite Parks and Recreation crew for two nights of fun including candy, costume contest, games, vendors, live music, and jumpers.

Contact Parks and Recreation at 505 839-3845 if you have any questions!

Village Administration Office: 505 839-3840

## PHOTOGRAPHY FEATURED

Bob Christensen photography is featured at the Los Lunas Museum of History & Arts through Sept. 30, 2023.

Christensen moved to New Mexico after being discharged from the Army in 1970. He has been a resident of Valencia County since 1972

Since the mid-1970's he has travelled around New Mexico photographing the state's distinctive vernacular architecture.

He has had exhibits in 2010 at the Los Lunas Museum of Heritage & Arts; in 2014 in collaboration with Albuquerque sculptor Tim Prythero at the Los Lunas Museum; in 2015 at the Albuquerque Museum; and in 2016 at the Roswell Museum.

Christensen was featured in an Article by Kate Nelson in November, 2013 issue of New Mexico Magazine as well as numerous other publications. He also was featured in an episode of ¡Colores! in 2014 that was picked up nationally in major PBS markets.

His complete collection is in the Palace of the Governors Photo Archives in Santa Fe.

## ARTS AND CRAFTS /BAKE SALE/MORE

The Valley Lutheran Church Women will hold their annual arts and crafts, bake sale, and raffle Saturday, October 21, 2023, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the church, 3259 NM Hwy 47.

More than fifteen vendors will offer products plus there will be a raffle and bake sale. Food will be available from Hosting Tome Todo Food and Kettle Korn Trucks.

A donation of 25% of the proceeds goes to Valencia Shelter Services.

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY SPEAKERS

The Valencia County Historical Society is sponsoring the following speakers and events for Fall 2023.

Valencia County Version of Antiques Road Show at the Belen Harvey House on Sunday, Oct. 29, at 2 p.m.

Kat Gullahorn: speaking on "The Story of 'Hi Jolly' and the U.S. Camel Corps" at the Belen Public Library Saturday, Nov. 4, 2 p.m.

Louis Huning speaking on "R.S. Ewell: A Frontier Soldier in New Mexico" at the Los Lunas Museum of Heritage & Arts Saturday, Dec. 2, 2 p.m.

Everyone is welcome A \$5 donation is requested.

## EXPANDED RECREATION CENTER OPENING

The grand opening of the newly expanded Village of Los Lunas Recreation Center will be held Saturday, Oct. 14, 2023, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the facility, 1103 Hwy 314.

A special ribbon cutting will be at noon and free food, volleyball tournament, a DJ with music, plus other activities will be available.

Improvements include:

Second gymnasium, locker rooms, restrooms, and multi-use classroom space.

Construction of artificial turf improvements to Daniel Fernandez Park softball field.

## COUNCIL PLANS FOR FUTURE

The Village Council has approved the Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan (ICIP) and submitted it to the state with the Number One priority being the Interstate 25 interchange and bridge construction project.

Plans are for the corridor to run along Morris Road from I-25 to NM Hwy 314 before crossing over the Rio Grande and connecting to NM Hwy 47 so that additional access will be provided.

The second item on the ICIP list is the Central Rail Park utility extension project. The total cost is estimated to be \$6.4 million and the village has so far secured \$4.1 million. The project will be broken up into phases with work on phase one beginning later this year.

The third item on the ICIP list is an Aquatic Center with an estimated cost of \$20 million. Village officials are considering conducting a needs assessment study for this major project.

Improvements to the Sun Ranch Village Road and NM Hwy 6 intersection is the fourth ICIP item to be considered. The Village has obtained \$950,000 for the project through the New Mexico Legislature and needs an additional \$707,000 to fully fund it.

The fifth priority approved by the Village council is construction of a sound barrier on NM Hwy 6, spanning the northern perimeter of Jubilee, the active adult community. This project came about because of concerns about the high volume of traffic on the highway and the noise it generates.

## VETERANS DAY IN LOS LUNAS

The annual Veterans Day ceremony will be held Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023, at 11 a.m. at Daniel Fernandez Memorial Park, hosted by the Village of Los Lunas, Los Lunas Invested in Veterans Events (LIVE) Inc, and Blue Star Mothers of Valencia County.

Speaker will be Jack Lovato, quartermaster, VFW Post 9676 in Los Lunas. The event will include refreshments, songs performed by the Jubilation! Barbershop Singers and other events.

Organizers of the Nov. 11 annual event acknowledge the help of the following:

American Legion Post 81, Belen; American Legion Rider Chapter 2, Belen; Amor Flowers, Belen; (Wreath); Blue Star Mothers of Valencia County; Boy Scout Troop 360; Combat Veterans Motorcycle Association ® (CVMA®);

Also Daniel D. Fernandez VFW Post 9676; Dept. of New Mexico, Albuquerque Chapter, American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.; Event Pros Audio Visual (Sound – Stage) Production; Fiesta Tent Rentals – (Tent & Chairs);

Jubilee (Adult Community); Los Lunas Fire Department; Los Lunas High School JROTC; Los Lunas Parks and Recreation Department; Los Lunas Police Department; Main Street Muscle & Fitness Center; Patriot Riders; Printers Press – Albuquerque; Pueblo of Isleta Veterans Association;

RAKS Building Supply (Food); Starbucks; Valencia High School JROTC; VFW Post 2387 Belen; VFW Post 9676 Riders; and the Village of Los Lunas.

Veterans Day is a public holiday dedicated to honoring anyone who has served in the United States military.

The holiday began as a day to remember at the end of World War I and was declared a holiday by President Woodrow Wilson in 1919.

Originally known as Armistice Day, the holiday became Veterans Day in 1954.

## VILLAGE LIBRARY NUMBERS

The annual report to the New Mexico State Library was submitted for the Los Lunas Public Library and its branch library the Museum of Heritage & Arts.

Here are a few statistics:

There were 43,365 visits to the library and museum in FY 2023. That is up from 22,523 after COVID restrictions were lifted.

- 1,045 children attended programs targeted for children ages zero to five; up from 883.
- 2,120 children attended programs targeted for children ages six to eleven; up from 1,515.
- 2,120 young adults attended programs targeted for young adults ages twelve to eighteen; up from 1,468.
- 1,294 adults attended programs targeted for adults ages nineteen or older; up from 540.
- 43,092 materials (books, CDs, DVDs) circulated; up from 22,735. Of the 43,092 materials, 33,547 were children's materials.
- 217,708 electronic materials (e-books, downloadable videos, and audio files) were downloaded; up from 167,543.



## A BIT OF LOS LUNAS HISTORY

"A Cultural & Economic History of Los Lunas" was written by Los Lunas Library Director Cynthia Shetter and can be found on the Village's website [loslunasnm.gov](http://loslunasnm.gov). This newsletter runs excerpts from Shetter's writing.

### Valencia County Seat

Valencia County was one of seven counties comprising New Mexico prior to 1850 and at one time stretched from Texas to California.

The county boundaries of the state have been through no less than a dozen changes since Mexico seceded to the United States in 1848 establishing New Mexico as a territory. The most recent change to Valencia County was in 1981 when Cibola County was created from the western half of Valencia County.

In 1875, the legislative assembly of the Territory of New Mexico voted to move the county seat of Valencia County to Los Lunas from Tomé. The elevated economy and political influence of wealthy residents are thought to have precipitated this change.

A two-story adobe courthouse, similar to the style built in Tomé and in Lincoln County, was built on the site of the present day public library. The courtroom and offices were on the top floor and cells were underneath.

Legend has it that famed Socorro lawman, Elfego Baca, broke his father, Francisco Baca, out of the jail when he was a teen. His father was a Sheriff in Belen and was being held for shooting two cowboys for disorderly conduct.

Waiting for the jailer to leave to take part in the festivities of the feast of St. Teresa, young Elfego used a ladder found at the rear of the courthouse to gain access to the second floor and freed his father through a hole in the courtroom floor.

As they ran for the brush surrounding the courthouse, they stole some venison and chile left drying outside.

The courthouse remained there until a fire in August of 1912 hastened the construction of a two-story federalist style brick courthouse at the northwest corner of Main and Luna streets. An estimated 5,000 people attended the dedication for the new courthouse held Labor Day, September 2, 1913.

The guest speaker, Governor W.C. McDonald, and others gave speeches. Fathers Dochere, Picard, Ralliere, and Dastemnie blessed the steps of the courthouse, followed by games, horseraces, and a barbeque in Huning Grove next to the river.

## LOCAL EVENTS

**Saturday, Sept. 23, 2023**  
Community Cleanup Event  
8 a.m. – noon  
Call to Volunteer  
505 839-5658

**Monday, October 9, 2023**  
Columbus Day  
Village Offices are open  
Garbage collected as usual

**Farmers Market**  
Tuesdays 4 - 7 p.m.  
Heritage Park on Lambros Loop  
Across from Smiths Grocery  
Fresh locally produced items

**Attend a Village Council Meeting**  
6 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 7 & 28  
6 p.m. Thursday, Oct 5 & 19  
660 Main St NW  
Main Street and Don Pasqual  
Meetings will be virtual and in-person. Check Village website for agenda [loslunasnm.gov](http://loslunasnm.gov).

**Los Lunas Public Library Now Open**  
9 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Monday – Saturday  
460 Main Street NE 505 839-3850

## BUSINESS ROUNDUP

**CHRISTOPHER'S  
LEFTOVERS ETC LLC**  
604 Main St NE  
505 865-3300  
(new owner)

**EL SUPER  
TACO RESTAURANT**  
223 Hwy 314 SW  
317 220-2745  
(new location)

**FRESH BARBERSHOP**  
3476 Main St NE Ste C  
505 515-5829  
(new business)

**CHINA SUPER BUFFET**  
2510 Main St NE Ste G  
505 865-8822  
(new owner)