



**ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FIESTA ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
*Julie Morgas Baca Will Lead World's Largest Balloon Event*

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Contact: Tom Garrity, Balloon Fiesta Media Director, 505.710.6567

ALBUQUERQUE, NM — The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta announces that Julie Morgas Baca, will lead the non-profit organization as its new Executive Director. Morgas Baca, recently retired as the Bernalillo County Manager and will assume leadership of the organization September 3, 2024. The 52<sup>nd</sup> Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta powered by ExxonMobil will launch October 5-13, 2024 from Albuquerque's Balloon Fiesta Park.

Selected through an intense nationwide search process by Berkheimer Clayton Retained Executive Search in Los Angeles, Morgas Baca succeeds Paul Smith as Executive Director of AIBF who has been with the organization for 27 years. A highly respected government executive, she has led Bernalillo County as County Manager since 2015, and has extensive experience in policy development, strategic planning, fiscal management, and community engagement. Previously, she was CEO of the National Hispanic Cultural Center Foundation, and Deputy Bernalillo County Manager for Community Services. She started her career with the Second Judicial District Court as Fiscal Services Director.

A well-loved treasure of New Mexico, the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta stages the world's premier ballooning event featuring 550 balloons, attracting hundreds of thousands of tourists and balloonists annually. AIBF promotes the sport of ballooning, educates people about flying balloons, and promotes the City of Albuquerque, and the State of New Mexico, nationally and internationally. "We are so pleased to welcome Jule Morgas Baca" says Judy Nakamura, President of the AIBF board of directors. "Her leadership track record, her impressive background, her contacts in community and government, make her the right choice for AIBF."

"Leading the Fiesta is the opportunity of a lifetime," says Morgas Baca. "I am honored and delighted to begin this new journey with such an influential board and accomplished team who are instrumental to the success of Fiesta."

**About the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta**

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, powered by ExxonMobil is a festival of hot air balloons that takes place in October in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. It is the largest gathering of balloons and balloonists in the world. For details on events, schedule, entertainment and photographs visit our website [www.balloonfiesta.com](http://www.balloonfiesta.com) and follow us on Twitter @BalloonFiesta and Facebook.