

Sunport Celebrates AXN Honors for Deputy Director and Fresquez Concessions

Trailblazing leader and local partner earn national acclaim

ALBUQUERQUE — The Albuquerque International Sunport (ABQ) is proud to announce that Aviation Deputy Director Gary Gilliard and longtime concessions partner Fresquez Concessions have received national recognition from Airport Experience News (AXN), highlighting the Sunport's leadership in innovation, inclusion, and local partnerships.

Deputy Director Gilliard was honored with the **Best DE&I Trailblazer Award** (across all airports), recognizing his leadership in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within the airport concessions program. Since joining the Aviation Department in 2023, Gilliard has played a key role in delivering the Sunport's completely refreshed concessions program as part of the airport's once-in-a-generation renovation.



"This is well-deserved recognition," said **Mayor Keller**. "With Gary's leadership and partners like Fresquez, the Sunport reflects the best of our city's spirit while supporting our businesses and families."

Under Gilliard's leadership, the program emphasizes local identity and economic opportunity, with 80% of food and beverage spots representing New Mexican brands. Initiatives such as the Ascend ABQ small-business concessions program have also helped local entrepreneurs to bring their projects to the Sunport.

"I'm deeply honored to receive this award," said **Gilliard**. "Our goal has always been to reflect Albuquerque's diverse heritage while opening doors for local businesses to succeed at the Sunport, and this nod reflects the

incredible collaboration across our team and community partners."

"These awards underscore the strength of our partnerships and our vision for tomorrow's Sunport," said **Acting Aviation Director Manny Manriquez**. "By prioritizing local businesses and inclusive growth, we are setting a national standard for airport hospitality."

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About the Albuquerque International Sunport

Owned and operated by the City of Albuquerque's Aviation Department, The Albuquerque International Sunport is New Mexico's largest commercial airport, welcoming over 5 million passengers each year. Served by six major carriers, three cargo carriers and two commuter airlines, the Sunport offers nonstop service between Albuquerque and 30+ destinations, with worldwide connectivity.