



Bernalillo County and the ExxonMobil Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta® Announce 2026

“X Marks the Spot” Program

Landowners help pilots identify safe landing sites, become eligible for daily prizes

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts:

Makayla Roberts, media@balloonfiesta.com, 505-898-8589

Stephanie Kitts, skitts@balloonfiesta.com, 505-309-0851

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Bernalillo County and the ExxonMobil Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta® today announced the 2026 X Marks the Spot program, inviting Albuquerque residents to help hot air balloon pilots identify accessible, safe and viable landing locations during the 54th ExxonMobil Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, set to take place October 3-11, 2026.

The program encourages property owners to place a large white X on their land as a visual signal to pilots that a balloon landing is welcome there. Participating landowners who host a landing will have the opportunity to receive daily prizes.

“Balloon Fiesta depends on the support and hospitality of the community, especially the landowners who are willing to provide pilots with additional landing options,” said Jennifer Garcia, Director of Operations and Logistics / Event Director for the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. “As the metro area continues to grow and open land becomes more limited, the X Marks the Spot program gives pilots an important visual tool while allowing residents to play a meaningful role in an event they know and love.”

The X Marks the Spot program was created as a proactive response to the changing landscape of the Albuquerque metro area. By displaying a white X, participating landowners provide pilots with a clear visual indication that their property is available for a balloon landing. The program strengthens the connection among residents, pilots and the event that brings visitors and balloonists from around the world to Albuquerque each fall.

“X Marks the Spot is so much more than a landing site,” says Bernalillo County District 4 Commissioner Walt Benson. “It is community involvement, safety and preserving the experiences that make our Balloon Fiesta so special. When landowners participate, they become an essential part of helping pilots navigate safely while keeping this extraordinary Albuquerque tradition strong.”

Balloon Fiesta pilots will carry cards to collect information from landowners after landing on a marked property. At the conclusion of each day’s flying events, Balloon Fiesta officials will draw one “landowner of the day,” who will receive a prize package.

About 200 white X markers are available for landowners at no cost, while supplies last. Residents may also create their own white X markers using white sheets or similar materials.



Landowners interested in participating can pick up a white X marker at the following locations, Monday through Friday between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm:

- Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta offices, 4401 Alameda Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113
- Bernalillo County Sheriff's Posse, 10308 2nd Street, Albuquerque, NM 87114
- North Domingo Baca Multigenerational Center, 7521 Carmel Ave NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113
- The Village of Los Ranchos Administrative Office, 6718 Rio Grande Blvd NW, Los Ranchos De Albuquerque, NM 87107
- Frontier Market, 3677 Corrales Rd, Corrales, NM 87048
- Raymond G. Sanchez Community Center, 9800 4th St NW #2125, Albuquerque, NM 87114
- Village of Corrales Hall, 4324 Corrales Rd, Corrales, NM 87048

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About the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, Inc.

The ExxonMobil Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta® is an annual festival of hot air balloons that takes place every October in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. It is the largest gathering of balloons and balloonists in the world. For details on events, schedule, and entertainment, visit our website, [BalloonFiesta.com](https://www.balloonfiesta.com) and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter/X](#), or [TikTok](#).

About Bernalillo County

Bernalillo County encompasses 1,160 square miles and is New Mexico's most populous county, serving more than 676,000 residents. County government provides a broad range of public services to residents of Albuquerque, Los Ranchos and Tijeras, as well as approximately 106,000 residents in unincorporated areas of the county.