

December 19, 2024



VALENCIA
COUNTY
News-Bulletin



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david@davidcchavez.com**

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*Wishing you a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year!*

Best Breakfast Burrito

Best Red Chile



Rutilio's Restaurant

2350 Main St NE, Los Lunas
505-565-2055

Facebook: Rutilio's Restaurant Los Lunas

Joey Acanfrio, and his wife, Natalie, opened Rutilio's in Los Lunas in 2012, and have managed it for more than a decade. Natalie is the daughter of Rudy and Rebecca Jaramillo, who opened the original location in Belen in 1986. The restaurant offers a full menu, including its award-winning breakfast burritos, New Mexican favorites, burgers and seasonal specials.

"I think our burritos are popular because they are nice and big," said Natalie. "Of course, the chile makes everything."

The red chile is primarily made by Joey, although he has recently brought another employee into the trusted chile-making fold.

"We haven't changed it in years. I've used the same chile pods since we opened. It's all in how you blend it. There are very few ingredients, but I can't tell you," Joey said. "The key is how you blend and season it. We keep winning, so we're doing something right."

Natalie said they are proud to win again, always striving to put out "good food and customer service."

Best Enchiladas

Best Salsa

Pete's Cafe

105 N. First St., Belen
505-864-4811
petescafenewmexico.com

Pete's Cafe in Belen has been in business for more than 75 years. Cousin co-owners Marie Torres and Camille Padilla bought the family-owned business in 2020. Tradition and consistency, along with a healthy dose of patience, keeps the quality of the food high, Padilla said.

This year, Pete's Cafe won Best Enchiladas and Best Salsa, both staples at the Hub City eatery.

"We offer a variety of enchiladas, including shrimp, which we just added," Padilla said. "It's been very popular actually. We've also been making a lot of enchi-



lada casseroles for customers. We also make rolled and stacked."

Torres said they've been using the same recipe for the salsa for years.

"It's the same salsa since the beginning — since Pete's started serving salsa," Torres said. "It has a good taste, a good bite. People will come in and buy pints of the salsa as well as our chips, which are also homemade."

Best Green Chile

Best Green Chile Stew



The Range Cafe

740 Main St., NE, Los Lunas
505-508-2144
dions.com

The Range Cafe in Los Lunas won Best Green Chile and Best Green Chile Stew — a high recognition for any restaurant in a state where chile is cherished by many.

Lawrence Padilla, general manager of The Range, said he and the staff are honored to be recognized by the community and they are excited to have won a food item for the first time.

"We're happy to continue to serve the community the best way we can," said Padilla. "We were (voted as) Best Restaurant one year and we've had best dessert a couple of times, so our culinary staff is really excited that we moved into the food section of it."

Best Green Chile Cheeseburger



Big Mike's Burgers and More

19388 N.M. 314, Belen
505-864-7918

Big Mike's Burgers & More has once again won the title of Best Green Chile Cheeseburger in Valencia County.

Mike Montano, the restaurant's owner, said while it's a "basic burger," the success of his green chile cheeseburger is the seasonings that elevate the patty, and a buttered, toasted bun take it to the next level.

"We appreciate everyone voting for us every year," Montano said. "We wouldn't be successful without them."

VOTED BEST REALTOR® OF VALENCIA COUNTY 9 CONSECUTIVE YEARS



NANCY A. MONTOYA
REALTOR®

Dear Valencia County,

It is an incredible honor to be recognized as the best real estate agent for the ninth consecutive year. This achievement reflects the trust and confidence you've placed in me, and I am endlessly grateful for the chance to be part of your real estate journeys. Your support inspires me to continue working tirelessly for our amazing community.

Thank you for allowing me to be part of your milestones. Here's to many more years of collaboration and success!

With heartfelt gratitude,

📞 505.480.2121

🌐 www.nancymontoya.com

☎ 505.866.4721

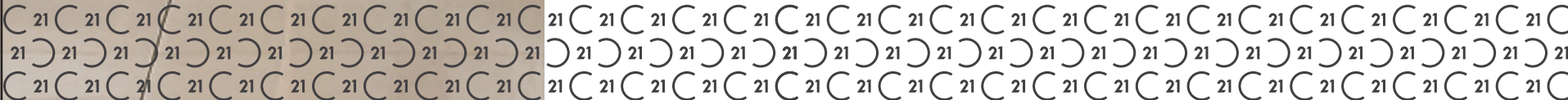
📍 2601 Main Street SW
Los Lunas, NM 87031

✉ nancysoldit@nancymontoya.com



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Best Pizza



Dion's

3460 Main St., NE, Los Lunas
505-865-5050

The winner of Best Pizza as voted on by the community is Dion's in Los Lunas — a familiar favorite for many in Valencia County. Dion's is no stranger to the Best Pizza category, and the restaurant has also been voted to have the Best Salad in years past.

Dion's general manager Mason Becker said the care and dedication of the employees is what makes the pizza extra special.

"Our food is made with intention and care and we love serving our customers," said Becker. "I love this community, and it just makes me excited to come to work everyday."

"Our food is made with intention and care and we love serving our customers."

Best Tacos

El Toro Patron Taqueria

244 Main St., Los Lunas
505-785-5639
eltoropatron.com

El Toro Patron Taqueria was voted by the community to have the Best Tacos in Valencia County.

The taqueria, owned and operated by the Cervantes family, has been in business for almost three years and is already making waves. In May, they were featured in New Mexico Magazine as one of the 19 must-try taco spots in New Mexico.

"Thank you for supporting us, and thanks to my wife, Gabriela, the one who does all the recipes for us. I only cook. Thank you to my daughter, Ximena; she is very wonderful and is very excited for this," said Francisco Cervantes. "We try to serve the best we can, and we do everything with the heart. We love Los Lunas, we love everybody in New Mexico and they are welcome anytime."



Best Posole

TJ's New Mexican Restaurant

319 N.M. 314, SW, Los Lunas
505-866-5123

TJ's New Mexican Restaurant owners Joey and Natalie Acanfrio, who also own Rutilio's restaurant in Los Lunas, are excited to see TJ's restaurant win Best Posole — a new category this year.

Joey said the red chile used in the dish is what really makes it special, and now is the time of year when it's most popular, so he welcomes the community to come give it a try.

"I think that we've built a nice clientele with people and they appreciate the food that we serve and they know we hold our standards high, so we're just thankful for all the people who come in our doors," said Natalie.



WE ARE HONORED TO BE AWARDED BEST RESTAURANT 2024!

I am grateful to our patrons and pledge to
earn your continued support in the future.

– Janet Montañó



2100 CAMINO DEL LLANO
BELEN, NM 87002
505-569-8888

Tues-Thurs 11am-7pm | Fri & Sat 11am-8pm
Sun 11am-3pm | Mon-Closed



Best Artist

Jo'l Moore

Jo'l Moore, of Rio Communities, began painting while working for the New Mexico Department of Corrections in 2008. While she uses acrylics and oil to create her impressionistic whimsical paintings, she jokes she's not a very good painter, although readers voted her the Best Artist in Valencia County for 2024.

"I slop the paint on, making it look intentional and it works," Moore said laughing. "My art is just fun."

As manager of Books on Becker, just down the street from the Belen Art Gallery, she's been able to use her artistic talents to create paintings inspired by children's literature.

"I'm kind of blown away by the two people who voted for me," she again said jokingly. "I had to reframe what 'best' means because I'm not the best. There are other local artists who are far more superior than me ... but I'm grateful for the honor."

Best Dentist

Dr. Roland Sanchez, DDS

Conquistador Dental
704 Christopher Road, Belen
505-864-7000

For the fourth year in a row, News-Bulletin readers chose Dr. Roland Sanchez, DDS, as the Best Dentist in Valencia County.

Staying updated on new innovations "to not only maintain patient care but be proactive in preventative care," is critical, said Sanchez, who said he has a "powerful team."

Sanchez has once again been voted Best Dentist in Valencia County.

Sanchez' practice, Conquistador Dental in Belen, has expanded to include cosmetics to face rejuvenation, allowing "patients to complete the whole cycle" in one location.



Best Attorney

David C. Chavez

651 N.M. 314 SW, Los Lunas
505-865-9696
davidcchavez.com

David C. Chavez has been serving New Mexicans for more than 40 years as a personal injury attorney.

He said he is passionate about providing personal, individual service and being the voice for injured parties and their families.

"It's such a blessing to be recognized by the community for the work we do in the legal community for our clients. They are our family," Chavez said. "They live and work in Valencia County and we're so blessed and honored that we're able to represent local because we're as local as red and green."



Randy's Electric

3539 NM 47, Peralta
505-865-7773

"It's pretty great," said Randy Smith, owner of Randy's Electric Company, about capturing two awards this year — Best Contractor and Best Electrician.

"It's our people in the field who are actually doing the work that makes the reputation" for Smith's family-owned business.

You will find Randy's Electric all over Valencia County.

"We're doing residential, commercial and industrial — both residential service and commercial service work," Smith adds. "We try to make sure our employees have good benefits and wages" to give them a vested interest in the company.

Best Contractor

Best Electrician

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Albuquerque (505) 275-6524



Noblin
Engraving



Best Educator

Toni Armijo



In her 23rd year of teaching, Toni Armijo is a seventh grade English teacher at Belen Middle School. She has worked as a teacher, academic coach and dean of students during her more than two decades in education.

"I'm honored, but honestly I was working with some of the best teachers. I'm a better teacher because of what I've learned from them and grown with so many amazing teachers in my career," Armijo said. "I've had the privilege to be around a lot of great educators, and I absolutely love my Belen Middle School students. I honestly couldn't ask for a better school."

Tanyia Montoya

Best Principal



Tanyia Montoya has been the principal at Belen Middle School for four years, after serving for more than two decades as a middle and high school teacher, principal and assistant principal.

"I feel like so many others are a part of this. I couldn't do what I do here with all the people here — from the educational assistants to the teachers, the cafeteria workers and custodians," Montoya said.

"I am so blessed to work with the best people and I am only able to be what I need to be because of them."

Best Financial Advisor

Pavlos Panagopolous

511 W. Reinken Ave., Belen
505-828-4068

As Best Financial Advisor, Pavlos Panagopolous, owner of Cetera Advisors, says he couldn't do it without his "amazing team." Headquartered in Belen, with

offices in Albuquerque, Panagopolous says they "support many wonderful organizations" throughout the county.

"We are always available to answer questions, process requests, and meet with (clients) regarding their unique set of investment goals, needs and concerns."



Best High School Coach

Greg Henington

Los Lunas High School head football coach Greg Henington led the Tigers to the playoffs the last four years, winning the 5A 2021 state championship.

"You must be willing to sacrifice in-season, seven days a week," Henington said of the commitment.

Henington, who was voted Best High School Coach, enjoys teaching the players and "see them apply that and be successful on the field."



"You must be willing to sacrifice in-season, seven days a week."

Best Firefighter

RC Fire Chief Andrew Tabet

Andrew Tabet was appointed fire chief at the Rio Grande Estates Fire Department in April 2022. Since then, the department has been renamed the Rio Communities Fire Department.

Tabet has been a firefighter since 2006, starting as a volunteer at the Abeytas Fire Department and then at Belen. After taking a few years off to tend to his family, he became a volunteer at Rio Grande Estates Fire Department in 2016.

Tabet has been credited for transitioning the department from an all-volunteer department to a hybrid department, where a total of 10 paid fire department employees have been hired, providing medical and fire coverage to the district. The department also has 18



dedicated volunteers."

"For me, its humbling because its a testament to my command staff to better serve the community," Tabet said of the honor. "I just want to tell the community 'thank you' for having the confidence in me and for their trust."



Est. 1928

Best Place to Live - 3x Winner

We are honored to be named one of Valencia County's Best Places to Live! This recognition reflects the hard work of our residents, businesses, and leaders who have made the Village of Los Lunas a thriving and innovative community.

With a growing tech ecosystem, Los Lunas is home to industry leaders like Meta and Amazon, creating opportunities for innovation and economic growth. Partnerships with the UNM Valencia Campus and the Greater Valencia Chamber of Commerce ensure our workforce is equipped for the future, strengthening our local economy.

Los Lunas also offers an outstanding quality of life, with affordable housing, year-round sunshine, and stunning landscapes. Our community combines excellent schools, cultural heritage, and diverse recreation opportunities, making it a place where families, professionals, and retirees can all thrive.

Thank you for this recognition—we're excited to continue building a bright future for Los Lunas!



www.loslunasnm.gov

Phone:

(505) 839-3840

Best Community Event

We are thrilled to have the Los Lunas Holiday Electric Light Parade named Best Event in Valencia County! This award is a testament to the incredible spirit of our community and the hard work of everyone who makes this cherished tradition so special.

Thank you to our residents, participants, and organizers for bringing the magic of the holidays to life. We look forward to making next year's parade even more memorable!

Best Insurance Agent



Selina Zamora

511 W. Reinken Ave., Belen
505-828-4068

The mission at Panagopoulos Insurance Agency is simple, according to Selina Zamora, who was voted Best Insurance Agent.

“Provide clear, reliable advice and help you make informed decisions that protect your future,” said Zamora, who is “beyond thrilled” to win the honor.

Zamora says they offer a range of coverage options that fits every family’s needs.



Photo courtesy of Daniel Montano

Best Musician or Band

Daniel Solis

Daniel Solis, who was voted as Valencia County’s Best Musician or Band, started playing music as a youngster growing up in northern New Mexico. He credits his grandfather, Marcelino Herrera, and older brother, Dominico, for teaching him how to play guitar and sharing the passion for New Mexican music.

Along with being the front man for The Daniel Solis Band, he is a woodshop teacher at Belen Middle School and is married to wife, Natalie, and has three children.

“Thank you so much to everyone who voted me Best Musician or Band of

Valencia County! I’m truly humbled and blessed by your support,” Solis said. “As always, I am a huge supporter of local musicians and talents, and I’m extremely thankful to be selected in this category.

“Us musicians work hard to share our talent and our love of music, so this is truly an honor. Looking ahead to the upcoming year, I’m excited to collaborate with many talented New Mexico artists and continue creating new original music. Be on the lookout for new tracks and music video productions too! There’s a lot more to come! Your support means the world to me so again, thank you so much for this honor!”

Best Primary Care Provider

Jennifer Tafoya Trujillo

101 N. Sixth St., Belen
505-317-7773
vhwell.com

After 19 years as a physician’s assistant working for someone else, Jennifer Tafoya Trujillo, along with her business partner and fellow practitioner, Cassandra Otero, opened Valencia Health and Wellness in Belen in January 2020.

Trujillo, this year’s Best Primary Care Provider, said she

went into medicine in order to serve the community she grew up in.

“There is no place in this world that I would rather work or live in than Valencia County, and I am deeply appreciative to my patients, staff and family for their ever-present support,” Trujillo said. “Practicing medicine is very challenging, but practicing in my own community grounds me and fills me with so many blessings.”



“There would be no place in this world that I would rather work or life in than Valencia County, and I’m deeply appreciative to my patients, staff and family for their ever-present support.”



RANDY'S ELECTRIC COMPANY

(505) 865-7773



THANKING GOD FOR HIS GLORY & GRACE | RANDY'S ELECTRIC COMPANY



Best Plumber

Hessinger's Plumbing, Heating and Cooling

505-864-3149
service@hessplb.com

"We say what we're going to do, then

we do it," says Kris Hessinger, owner of Hessinger's Plumbing, Heating and Cooling. "We have a lot of pride in our work."

Hessinger credits his employees, family and community.

"We want to give them the best service and take care of their needs."

Best Real Estate Agent

Nancy Montoya

2601 Main St., NW,
Los Lunas
505-865-3381
nancysoldit@nancymontoya.com

Nancy Montoya, of Century 21 Real Estate in Los Lunas, has been selected at Best Real Estate Agent for the ninth straight year.

"This award is a reflection of the relationships I've built and the incredible people I've had the privilege to serve," Montoya said.

Montoya is "motivated to keep delivering the best possible service," while providing "guidance, exper-



tise and solutions," to her clients.

Montoya, who has nearly 50 years of experience in real estate, opened Valencia County's only Century 21 franchise in 1981 with her husband, Joe.



Best Tattoo Artist

Orlando Sedillo

231 Sandoval Road, Ste. A, Los Lunas
505-203-5940

The tattoo studio is called 2nd Chances for a reason.

"I do a lot of cover-

ups," said tattoo artist Orlando Sedillo, who enjoys when clients "get something that they hate covered up with something they love."

Sedillo, voted as Best Tattoo Artist, does "everything from watercolor to portrait work" in a studio that is "quiet, more like a home."

Best Police Officer

BFPD officer Mark Gurule

While it came as a shock, Bosque Farms Police Detective Mark Gurule said it's an honor to have won Best Police Officer.

Gurule got his start as a police officer at Los Lunas Police Department, where he worked for 13 years before moving to BFPD a couple of years ago.

"There's several people who have helped me throughout the years to get to this point. I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for them," said Gurule. "(Police work) has its ups and downs, but dealing with people on good days is probably my favorite part, and also the people I work with."



Best Veterinarian

Dr. Patrick Sanchez

419 Main St., SW,
Los Lunas
505-866-1852
animalhospitalofloslunas.com

Animal Hospital of Los Lunas offers a wide range of veterinary services for pets such as wellness and vaccinations, diagnosing and treating health conditions, dental care and oral surgery, ultrasound and end-of-life care.

"I am truly humbled and honored to receive this recognition. This achievement is a testament to the trust our clients place in us and the passion my team brings to caring for every patient that walks through our doors," said Patrick H. Sanchez, DVM, the owner of and veterinar-



ian at Animal Hospital of Los Lunas. "Thank you for your support — it inspires us to continue delivering the highest level of care for pets and families in Valencia County."



Best Art Gallery

Belen Art League Gallery and Gifts

509 Becker Ave., Belen
505-861-0217
belenartleague.com

The Belen Art League was established in 1956 by Mary Lewis, who wanted to learn to paint. She got a few friends together and started the group. For nearly 50 years, the artists would meet in each other's homes, collaborating and creating art, which was shown at art shows and in local businesses.

In 2003, the city of Belen started leasing the current space, which has been transformed into a gallery and art studio, from a former senior center and gas company.

The volunteers who run the art league

have donated their time and talent to teach art to the community, create murals at different locations in and around the city, including the Veterans Memorial, Belen Public Library and other locations, and other community events.

"It enhances the reason why people want to live here," said Jo'l Moore, a past and future president of BAL. "Art and culture are a big deal when people are thinking about relocating."

"It's a great honor," said BAL member Mary Ann Black of being named Best Art Gallery, "because there are other fantastic galleries in the county. We want to thank our patrons and members for voting for us."

Best Bakery

Manny's Fine Pastries

515 Main St., NE, Los Lunas
505-865-7082
Email: mannysfinepastries@yahoo.com

Manny's Fine Pastries has been a family run business in Los Lunas for 28 years.

Betty Jean Villa, daughter of Manny, the original owner, calls Manny's a "vin-tage," bakery.

"Everything, we make from scratch," Villa said. "That's what's doing it."

Villa says the most popular items are fritters and empanadas.



BELEN CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS
would like to congratulate

Mrs. Tanyia Montoya
Best Principal

Mrs. Toni Armijo
Best Educator

Thank You Valencia County for your continued support.

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Proud to be a member of the Greater Valencia County Chamber of Commerce

Best Auto Shop

The Shop Automotive

100 Damon St.,
Rio Communities
505-916-0181

Eugene Wroten, a certified mechanic, opened The Shop Automotive in September 2018. Wroten and the other three mechanics work on both foreign and domestic vehicles as well as diesel. They're able to do "any and all repairs" from simple oil change to replacing motors.

"We can do anything that needs repair and, we also can do auto body work," Wroten said.

With a loyal customer base, Wroten said if you want a job done right, The Shop Automotive is the place to take your vehicle.

"We take on a lot of jobs that others can't figure out," he said. "A lot of shops are sending work our way."

Wroten said not only does he have a great customer base, but his mechanics are top notch.

"I pride myself in keeping the best of the best — hire the best, and we all take a lot of pride in what we do," he



said. "It means a lot to get the problem fixed the first time, and keep our customers aware how to take care of their vehicles. That's how we earn the trust of our customers."

Wroten said being

named Best Auto Shop is a "great achievement," saying he's grateful to the people who recognize and voted for the business.

"I believe in old-school ways — treating our customers right."



Best Barber Shop

Mario's Barbershop

2210 Sun Ranch Village
Loop, Los Lunas
505-550-9473

It is a team effort at Mario's Barbershop, which was voted Best Barber Shop.

"I have such strong people behind me," said Mario Sandoval, owner. "All of us are from the community. We grew up here."

Once a customer sits down, "We do it all. We do shaving, designs. We're an all-around barbershop. It's really fun."

Best Cannabis Dispensary

Smokal Smoke Local Dispensary

212 Becker Ave., Belen
505-319-6748
smokaldispensary.com

A native Belen and Valencia County cannabis dispensary, Smokal Smoke Local Dispensary focuses on its customers wellness needs. Whether you are looking for some relief from pain, lack of sleep or need something to just help take a load off, Smokal understands and has the natural products you need.

From CBD to THC, the dispensary offers a variety of edibles and concentrated vapes as well as cannabis



flower and more.

"We are a bit different than most dispensaries. Although we strive to be on the cutting edge with the latest selection and new products every day for our recreational clients,

our medical patients get special, discreet treatment from our amazing staff," said Jay Peters, owner. "Smokal is proud of our Smokal Locals Community for treating us as kindly as we treat them."

*"I pride myself
in keeping the
best of the best
— hire the
best, and we all
take pride in
what we do."*



Best Car Wash

Champion Xpress

250 Main St., NE,
Los Lunas
833-808-2876

Value-added benefits separate Champion Xpress from the competition, said Brandon Anderson, site leader.

“We do the extra here,” Anderson said. “We dry their windshield, prep their car.”

New equipment has also been added to the Los Lunas location. Anderson says fleet arrangements with law enforcement and local agencies “creates a tie that we’ve maintained and enjoy with the community.”



Best Child Care



Peralta's Playhouse

90 Molina Road, Peralta
505-869-4939

More than 120 children, school age and younger, are enrolled in Peralta's Playhouse.

“We just provide a high-quality child-care environment for the kids,” said Shawna Eskeets, director. “The staff is always welcoming.”

“We have activities all the time. We cater to the family.”

Kathy Armijo is the owner of Peralta's Play House, who was voted Best Child Care in Valencia County.

Starlight Cinema

Voted Best Entertainment Venue



Thank you for your Support!

2226 Sun Ranch Village Rd,
Los Lunas, NM 87031

Thank you for selecting
Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area
as Best for Outdoor Recreation Area in 2024



VALENCIA

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



Best Customer Service

Best Place to get a Cup of Coffee

Carved Yucca Coffee Co. Espresso Bar

610 N. Main St., Belen
Upcoming store front: 213 S. Main St., Belen
Instagram: @carvedyuccacoffeecoc

Cameron Montañño, owner of Carved Yucca Coffee Co. Espresso Bar, is thrilled to have been recognized by the community for Best Place to Get a Cup of Coffee and Best Customer Service.

"We're proud to call Belen our home — a community rich in heart, resilience and creativity. Our journey is driven by a deep love for hosting, a passion for authentic espresso, and a commitment to growth and innovation that uplifts our local business landscape. Winning is an honor, but our greatest reward is sharing this experience with the vibrant people who inspire us every day," said Montañño.

Carved Yucca's mobile espresso bar has been regularly parked at 610 N. Main St. in Belen since March 2024, but Montañño is excited to announce he will soon be opening up a store front location in Belen by early 2025.

To see the menu and hours, visit their Instagram page @carvedyuccacoffeecoc.



Best Floral Shop

Davis Floral

214 S. Main St.,
Belen
505-864-8722
davisfloraland-gifts.com

Dale and Teresa Davis continues the family tradition of excellence his mother started in Belen in 1945. The family-owned and operated business is committed to offering the finest floral arrangements and gifts, backed by service that is friendly and prompt.

Davis Floral specializes in a large inventory of fresh flowers, tropicals, plants, contemporary and traditional arrangements, high-style floral arrangements and more.

"It means a lot. In today's economy, it's rough for any little business," Davis said. "For the public to recognize us and tell us we're doing a good job warms my heart."



Best Entertainment Venue

Starlight Cinema

2226 Sun Ranch Village Road, Los Lunas
505-866-9066
starlightcinema8.com

Starlight Cinema 8 general manager Gary Jacobson said he's "extremely gratified by the community's choice" to vote the Los Lunas theatre as Best Entertainment Venue.

"We are extremely happy to work in this community. It's a beautiful community, and I have to say personally I've worked in multiple areas in different parts of the country, and I have said multiple times before that Valencia County is the nicest community I've ever worked in," Jacobson said.





Best Financial Institution

Nusenda Credit Union

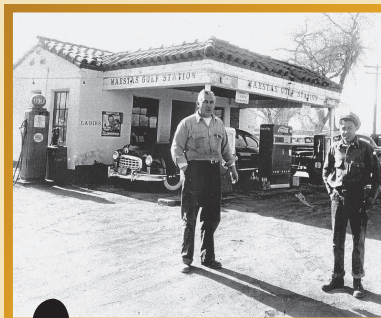
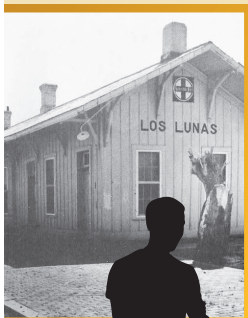
320 Main St., NE, Los Lunas
505-889-7755
nusenda.org

Nusenda members have access to many financial products and solutions, plus easy ways to support the communities and causes they care about. The credit union offers checking and savings accounts, mobile and internet banking, money management resources and more.

"This recognition from our community is a tremendous honor for us," said Judy Sandoval, Los Lunas office manager. "Being trusted as our members' financial institution is incredibly rewarding. Our greatest satisfaction comes from making a meaningful difference in our members' financial well-being and helping them achieve their goals."

Thank you for voting us Best Tourist Spot in Valencia County!

The Los Lunas Museum of Heritage & Arts



Open 10AM - 5PM Tuesday - Saturday
251 Main Street SE, Los Lunas
(505) 352-7720



We would like to say a **THANK YOU** to our community for their continued business and support over the past 38 years!

We are proud to be a part of our customer's projects from the seasoned contractor to the weekend warrior and everyone in between. We couldn't have achieved this recognition without our fantastic employees and are extremely thankful for their hard work and dedication. We will continue to work hard with providing our customers with the personal customer service and quality materials and products they have come to know. We wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Thank you!
RAKS Building Supply

108 Carson Dr,
Los Lunas, NM 87031
(505) 865-1100

205 Rio Bravo Blvd SW,
Albuquerque, NM 87105
(505) 452-1100

1530 12th St NW,
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 842-1103

501 Otero Ave E,
Socorro, NM 87801
(575) 835-1270

8 W Frontage Rd,
Edgewood, NM 87015
(505) 281-4451

Truss Plant
205 Rio Bravo Blvd SW
Albuquerque, NM 87105
505-866-3240

Shop Online: www.RAKS.com

Best Food Truck

Lonchera La Morada

Various locations
806-240-4998
Facebook: Lonchera La Morada

From tacos to tortas to burritos and their signature birria pizza, La Morada and its distinctive purple paint job brings some spicy joy to the local food truck scene.

"I am overjoyed to have achieved my childhood aspiration of running a food truck business," said owner Priscilla Navarrete Tarango. "I'm driven by my passion. I am deeply grateful to my customers, whose love for my cooking brings me immense happiness."



Best Funeral Home

Noblin Funeral Service

418 W. Reinken Ave., Belen
505-864-4448
221-D Main St. SE, Los Lunas
505-866-9992
noblinfuneralservice.com

Noblin Funeral Service offers a full line of services to families, including funeral and memorial services, burials and cremations, custom engraving on cremation urns and memorial keepsakes. Noblin will also assist families with making pre-arrangements for services and can provide military funeral honors to veterans.

"We are deeply honored to be voted Best Funeral Home in Valencia County for 2024," said owner Robert Noblin. "At Noblin Funeral Service, we remain committed to providing compassionate care, exceptional service and a legacy of trust to our community. Thank you for placing your confidence in us once again."



"At Noblin Funeral Service, we remain committed to providing compassionate care, exceptional service and a legacy of trust to our community."

Best Hair Salon

Hair Innovations

403 Main St., Belen
505-864-4337

Ronnie Torres, who has co-owned Hair Innovations with Barbara Torres for 39 years, is grateful for their customers and the staff. The salon opened in 1986, and has been in operation at the same location ever since. The salon has eight stylists and a nail technician, and offers everything from cuts, perms and color, to manicured nails.

Torres said the stylists and the customers make Hair Innovations a great salon.

"When people get along and know what they're doing, customers feel it's a great place to be and feel we're knowledgeable," Torres said. "We appreciate their continued support and glad we can still be there for them."



Best Hardware/ Lumber Store

RAKS Building Supply

108 Carson Drive, Los Lunas
505-865-1100
raks.com

An experienced management team and many younger employees is a combination for success at RAKS Building Supply in Los Lunas, according to Kenneth Trujillo, co-owner. Richie Tabet, co-owner/president, has called the staff, "like family."

"It means a lot to us because we've been around for 39 years," Tabet said of being voted Best Hardware/Lumber Store. "We've been involved with the community for a long time, and we credit a lot of it to our long-time employees and the good customers who have been with us."

RAKS, which is located in Los Lunas, Albuquerque, Socorro and Edgewood, provides a variety of products and services, including wood floor and roof truss design and manufacturing, same or next day delivery, window packages, lumber, sheet rock and drywall, fencing, paint and plumbing.

Tabet said RAKS prides itself on its one-on-one customer service as well as being competitively priced with their competitors.



In July, US LBM, a leading distributor of specialty building materials in the United States, acquired RAKS Building Supply. Tabet, who along with Kenny and Bobby Trujillo, continue to lead RAKS' day-to-day

operations.

"Our employees have a lot to do with it," Tabet said. "Customers have someone to wait on them and answer their questions."



Thank You Valencia County for your continued support.



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Albuquerque

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Best Hearing Center

Livingston Hearing Aid Center

835 Main St. NE, #102, Los Lunas
505-565-7285
llac.com

Livingston Hearing Aid Center is a family-owned business which has served the hearing impaired for more than 70 years. It has more than 105 locations throughout New Mexico — including in Los Lunas, Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado and Arizona.

“We are honored to have received the Valencia County vote. We are confident in our expertise and we take great pride in enriching the lives of our patients through better hearing,” said Pasqual Armijo, state licensed hearing instrument specialist at the Los Lunas office.

“Pasqual and I make a great team and it’s our joy to serve you better than anyone! Thank you for your vote Valencia County,” said Linda DeCosta, practice care coordinator.



Best Locally-Owned Business

High Desert Industrial Supply

830 N. Main St., Belen
505-864-4703

High Desert Industrial Supply offers an eclectic array of goods, including welding supplies, groceries, including frozen meat. There is also a deli counter, where they sell Frito pies, enchilada, chile dogs and breakfast burritos. The store also offers fresh meat and cheeses, as well as local and New Mexico-made products.

“We are incredibly happy and excited to have been voted for the third time in a row as Best Locally-owned Business in Valencia County,” said HDI owner Michael Vallejos. “We are proud to serve all our customers in the county. You customers are who keep us going; we cannot do this without you all. Thank you, Valencia County, for your continued support. We are humbled and honored by your vote.”

Best Mortgage Lender

State Employee Credit Union

280 Emilio Lopez Road, Los Lunas
505-983-7328
19390 N.M. 314, Belen
505-983-7328
secunm.org

A not-for-profit financial institution, State Employee Credit Union offers a complete line of loans, including home mortgages, auto loans, personal and secured loans and home equity loans. SECU membership is open to anyone who lives, works, worships or attends school in seven counties, including Valencia, Santa Fe, San Miguel, Sandoval, Rio Arriba, Bernalillo and Dona Ana counties.

Any state, city or county employee — as well as contracted employees and vendors of those entities — are also eligible for membership.

“Being named Valencia County’s Best Mortgage Lender for 2024 is a true honor. At State ECU, we pride ourselves on personalized service, community-focused lending and making homeownership achievable for local families,” CEO Andy Ramos said. “This award reflects our dedication to supporting our community and delivering exceptional service. Thank you to our members and team for your trust and hard work. It’s because of you we continue to succeed together.”



“This award reflects our dedication to supporting our community and delivering exceptional service.”



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John "JR" Craig, Owner



Best New/Used Car Dealership

Melloy Ford

499 Emilio Lopez Road, NW, Los Lunas
505-866-3100
Melloyford.com

“We feel connected to the community,” said Dennis Taylor, Melloy Ford’s general manager, pointing out most of their 120-plus employees live in Valencia County.

Taylor said that the dealership is always rated high in consumer sentiment. Melloy Ford was voted Best New/Used Car Dealership in Valencia County.

“It’s always good to hear that we’re getting more things right than wrong,” he said.

Best Place to get an Oil Change

Big O Tires

1820 Main St., NW, Los Lunas
505-565-4800

Big O Tires is known for many things, including “complete auto repair,” from mechanical to brakes. Add oil change to that list.

“It may be our attitude with our community,” that brings customers back, said Arturo Morachiz, store manager. “We are always friendly and smiling. We’ll fix it right.”





Best Place to Get a Sweet Treat

Europa Food.Farm.Festival

2105 NM-314, Los Lunas
505-328-3874
foodfarmfestival.com

If your sweet tooth is calling, community members have voted that Europa Food. Farm.Festival in Los Lunas is the place to go. The scenic and scrumptious cafe, opened seven years ago, has evolved to include an event venue, popular for weddings, and an Airbnb.

Manager Joshua Gabaldon said he and staff are grateful for the recognition, and he recommends the gelato and caramel apple walnut pie.



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Best Restaurant

La Dos Gringas

2100 Camino Del Llano, Belen
505-569-8888

Mother and daughter Janet and Desiree Montano opened La Dos Gringas in Belen in 2018 after having been in the restaurant industry for more than four decades.

Keeping authentic New Mexican food as their main focus, La Dos Gringas has been voted Best Restaurant in Valencia County. They previously won Best Nachos.

Offering dine in or take out, customers can choose from a large menu, which includes chile rellenos, carne adovada, tamales, enchiladas, stuffed sopapilla plates as well as classics such as burgers, salads and more.

"There's been a lot of challenges over the years — including Covid, and a lot of health challenges," Janet said. "My staff has really supported me. Without them, I wouldn't be here."

"They are all wonderful, dedicated and most of them have been with me since I opened."

The owner of La Dos Gringas is also grateful to their loyal customers, who she has been able to get to know personally.

"To me, it's such an honor," Montano said of when she learned of being named Best Restaurant. "There are a lot of good restaurants out there, but this is the best

you can get.

"We have a very nice atmosphere here. My staff treats all our customers with respect, and we have a

large, eight-page menu. We have something for everyone," she said. "In the last couple of years, we've been able to do a lot of catering."



Best Thrift Store/ Consignment Store

Adelante Bargain Square

19554 N.M. 314, Belen
505-923-4250
goadelante.org

Adelante operates Bargain Square Thrift Store as a social enterprise, providing employment for people with disabilities. The store and its employees put out thousands of donations every day and are open seven days a week. Shoppers can find great deals on everything from clothing and housewares to furniture.

"Adelante is truly honored for Bargain Square to be recognized for so many years in a row as the best Thrift Store in Valencia County. This award reflects the incredible dedication of our team and the support of our wonderful community, and it inspires us to continue creating a positive impact through our thrift store," Rebecca Sanford, Adelante president/CEO said. "Thank you to the donors, shoppers and team members who made this achievement possible."

Best Tire Shop

Craig Independent Tire Co.

19236 N.M. 314, Belen
505-864-4464

Craig Independent Tire Co. was established in 1981 by John and Carolyn Craig. Their son, John and his wife, Cassandra, continue the tradition of excellent service.

Craig Tires offers a variety of services, including tires, tire repair, alignment, brake repair, suspension and more. The Craigs credit their longtime success with a commitment to the community, providing honest and trustworthy service.

"This means we're valuable to the community and we're truly grateful," said Cassandra Craig. "We feel valued and respected."



BEST HIGH SCHOOL COACH



Los Lunas Schools would like to congratulate
Mr. Henington - Los Lunas High School Football
Being Voted Best High School Coach 2024



Best Community Event

Los Lunas Christmas Parade

The Los Lunas Christmas Light Parade, a long-time and treasured tradition in Los Lunas, was voted as Best Community Event this year.

Los Lunas recreation supervisor Matthew Jaramillo, who coordinates the event, said he is ecstatic about the award, as there is a lot of time and work that goes into hosting the annual parade, which brings Christmas joy to countless community members.

"We're extremely grateful," said Jaramillo. "In public work, you don't get recognized everyday, so it's nice when you do, especially for something of this capacity."

Best Outdoor Recreation Area or Park



Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area

On behalf of the Valencia Soil and Water Conservation District, VSWCD Vice Chairwoman Teresa de Cherif thanks the community for voting Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area as Best Outdoor Recreation Area.

"We thank all the individuals and organizations who have helped make Whitfield a preserve where youth of all ages, their families, and visitors from near and far can connect with nature for outdoor recreation and education," she said. "Over the last 20 years, hundreds of volunteers planted more than 8,000 native trees and bushes, and federal and state partners funded Whitfield's walking trails, irrigation ditches and large pond."

"Today, Whitfield is home to salt-grass meadows, towering cottonwoods and restored wetlands that provide habitat for elk, wild turkeys, cougars and over 200 species of migratory birds. With your continued engagement, Whitfield will always be the nature park folks love exploring."



"We thank all the individuals and organizations who have helped make Whitfield a preserve where youth of all ages, their families and visitors from near and far can connect with nature ..."



Best Community Service/ Nonprofit Organization

La Merced Moose Riders

La Merced Moose Riders, of the Moose Lodge 2550 in Rio Communities, is a not-for-profit group that enjoys riding motorcycles together and fundraising and having fun while doing it. They have a total of 37 active members, all who live in Valencia County.

Ron Olsen, president of the local chapter, said it was Abran Gonzales who started the chapter in February 2023.

"The main reason we started it was because we all love to ride, and this is a great way for us to get together and ride and provide a lot of help to our community," Olsen said. "Everything we do we do for a specific reason. This year we hosted the Poker Run at the Rio Abajo Becker Street Festival, and all the proceeds went to the youth of the community."

The local organization has hosted many events, including a turkey bingo to raise money for a young man who had brain surgery. They've helped a local person with an amputated leg get a new prosthetic.

"This past year alone, we've raised and donated between \$9,000-\$10,000," Olsen said. "This is what was on our hearts when we started this group. Our main focus is the kids because there's not a lot of support channels in Valencia County."

When Olsen heard the La Merced Moose Riders were being recognized, he was speechless.

"To be recognized for what we do is amazing," he said. "We're not out there campaigning. It's overwhelming knowing people see what we're doing."

"The main reason we started it was because we all love to ride, and this is a great way for us to get together and ride and provide a lot of help to our community."



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Best Community to Live In

Village of Los Lunas

“Winning the 2024 Best Community to Live In award is rewarding because it validates all the hard work and dedication put in by all the individuals working together to make Los Lunas the best place it can be,” said Los Lunas Village Administrator Greg Martin. “From our committed governing body to the talented and professional village employees, the team at the village of Los Lunas strives daily to provide first-class services to its residents, businesses and visitors.”

“We appreciate the opportunity to serve the citizens of this great community and are grateful to be given this award — once again — recognizing our continuous efforts.”



Best Tourist Spot

Los Lunas Museum of Heritage and Arts

251 Main St., SE, Los Lunas
505-352-7720

“We, here at The Los Lunas Museum of Heritage & Arts, would like to thank our community for voting us as Best Tourist Spot in Valencia County,” said museum manager Louis Huning Jr.

“The (museum) and our staff look forward to continuing our efforts highlighting our local culture and heritage by preserving our past, acknowledging our present and looking forward to our future. We are proud to offer services

such as genealogical research assistance, yearly adult and youth art exhibits showcasing local talent, historical displays honoring those who made our current community possible, as well as talks from renowned speakers of various disciplines.

“We are honored by this recognition, and we look forward to welcoming our community and tourists to join us in our mission of remembering where we come from while making Valencia County a premier destination.”

“We are honored by the recognition, and we look forward to welcoming our community and tourists to join us in our mission of remembering where we come from while making Valencia County a premier destination.”





2024 BEST OF VALENCIA COUNTY WINNERS

BEST FOOD

Best breakfast burrito: Rutilio's (Los Lunas)
Best enchiladas: Pete's Cafe
Best green chile: The Range Cafe
Best green chile cheeseburger: Big Mike's Burgers & More
Best green chile stew: The Range Cafe
Best pizza: Dion's
Best posole: TJ's New Mexican Restaurant
Best red chile: Rutilio's (Los Lunas)
Best salsa: Pete's Cafe
Best tacos: El Toro Patron Taqueria

BEST COUNTY FOLK

Best artist: Jo'l Moore
Best attorney: David C. Chavez
Best contractor: Randy's Electric
Best dentist: Dr. Roland Sanchez, DDS
Best educator: Toni Armijo
Best electrician: Randy's Electric
Best financial advisor: Pavlos Panagopoulos
Best firefighter: Andrew Tabet
Best high school coach: Greg Henington
Best insurance agent: Selina Zamora

Best musician or band: Daniel Solis
Best plumber: Hessinger's Plumbing, Heating and Cooling
Best primary care provider: Jennifer Tafoya Trujillo
Best principal: Tanyia Montoya
Best police officer: Mark Gurule
Best real estate agent: Nancy Montoya
Best tattoo artist: Orlando Sedillo
Best veterinarian: Dr. Patrick Sanchez

BEST BUSINESS & SERVICE

Best art gallery: Belen Art Gallery
Best auto shop: The Shop Automotive
Best bakery: Manny's Fine Pastries
Best barber shop: Mario's Barbershop
Best cannabis dispensary: Smokal Smoke Local Dispensary
Best car wash: Champion Xpress
Best child care: Peralta's Playhouse
Best customer service: Carved Yucca Coffee Co. Espresso Bar
Best place to get a cup of coffee: Carved Yucca Coffee Co. Espresso Bar
Best entertainment venue: Starlight Theater
Best financial institution: Nusenda Credit Union
Best floral shop: Davis Floral

Best food truck: Lonchera La Morada
Best funeral home: Noblin Funeral Service
Best hair salon: Hair Innovations
Best hardware/lumber store: RAKS Building Supply
Best hearing center: Livingston Hearing Aid Center
Best locally-owned business: High Desert Industrial Supply
Best mortgage lender: State Employees Credit Union
Best new/used car dealership: Melloy Ford
Best place to get an oil change: Big O Tires
Best place to get a sweet treat: Europa Food.Farm.Festival
Best restaurant: La Dos Gringas
Best thrift/consignment store: Adelante Bargain Square
Best tire shop: Craig Independent Tire Co.

BEST OF OUR COMMUNITY

Best community event: Los Lunas Christmas Parade
Best outdoor recreation area or park: Whitfield Wildlife Conservation Area
Best community service/nonprofit organization: La Merced Moose Riders
Best community to live in: Village of Los Lunas
Best tourist spot: Los Lunas Museum of Heritage and Arts



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Pasqual Armijo, HIS
State Licensed Hearing Instrument Specialist



Linda DeCosta
Practice Care Coordinator



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