

Bernalillo County Commissioner
Steven Michael Quezada



About the Commissioner:

Steven Michael Quezada was elected chair of the Bernalillo County Board of Commissioners for a one-year term that lasted from Jan. 9, 2018 to Jan. 8, 2019. Commissioner Quezada was elected vice chair of the commission from January 2017 to January 2018.

He is a Screen Actors Guild award-winning actor, producer and comedian with a long record of public service for Bernalillo County children and families.

Mr. Quezada is a life-long resident of New Mexico. He pursued his love of performing by studying theatre arts at Eastern New Mexico University. He has raised money for organizations such as Youth Development Incorporated and countless others. Steven has also worked with the gang intervention, Mi Voz and Elev8 programs through YDI, taught acting to local kids, and educated future filmmakers at the Digital Arts and Technology Academy.

Steven won his first political race in 2013 to earn a seat on the Albuquerque Board of Education. He is married to Cherise Quezada, has four children, and plays golf in his spare time -- however little time that may be.

IN THE COMMUNITY - DISTRICT 2



La Mexicana: An Albuquerque Essential

In the heart of Albuquerque's Barelás neighborhood lies an authentic New Mexican restaurant and tortilla factory named La Mexicana. Originating in 1932, this Albuquerque staple has been making homemade, locally-sourced tortillas for nearly 88 years. In fact, it is officially Albuquerque's first tortilla company!

But now it's time to introduce the masterminds behind it all: meet owners Tony and Margy Hernandez. This couple powerhouse took over the family business from Tony's

"It's an honor when people like your food. It makes you feel good. You can make the grumpiest people happy."

- Margy Hernandez

parents, who initially started the company by selling tortillas from their house, right from their front door. As Margy says, "My husband's father, Manuel, was a genius with corn tortillas

and he also made tamales and tacos to sell too." With help from local farmers, this community-minded business purposefully sources all corn used for their products from right here in New Mexico. An extra bonus? It's all non-GMO as a result. Put this quality of ingredients together with bargain prices and service so welcoming it includes free hugs with morning smiles, no wonder La Mexicana is a busy locals' local café!

Although the restaurant has always been located within the Barelás neighborhood, it wasn't immune to growing pains. La Mexicana became such a hit among locals that it eventually

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

415 Tijeras NW
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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

[Click here](#) to learn more about Bernalillo County Economic Development.

WHAT'S NEW IN DISTRICT 2?

To learn more about what's happening in District 2, [click here](#)

LA MEXICANA

[Click here](#) if you would like to learn more about La Mexicana.

IN THE COMMUNITY (CONTINUED)

outgrew its original space, and in 1980, Tony and Margy moved to 5th and Atlantic and were there for over ten years. In the early 90's it was then relocated to 4th and Bridge. Unfortunately, in 2001 the business suffered a fire and the Hernandez family decided to permanently close thereafter.

... Or so they thought.

The public demand was still high, and the taste for their delicious homemade tortillas never wavered. Former patrons kept asking Margy and Tony if they were ever going to reopen, and it even got to the point that people started (literally) knocking on their door requesting tortillas, tamales, chips, and more.

Needless to say, it was time for La Mexicana's revival.

To the public's delight, the Hernandez's decided to move the business back to its original location. After some remodeling (and elbow



grease), the restaurant and factory reopened in 2010.

"When we were expanding, we decided we would never move out of Barelas. The tortilla factory allows us to not change as much as other restaurants. We want to be affordable for the neighborhood. We started out

slow and got some of our wholesale business back. It was a time where restaurants were paying attention to quality of products and people were demanding quality," says Margy.

However, ten years later the Hernandez's are yet again having to pivot their operations. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has provided its challenges to many people, and Tony and Margy are no exception. As a result of closures, La Mexicana's sales are down 35% and some employees were let go. One of their employees then tested positive for the virus, and the business had to be shut down for two weeks.

When asked how they've adapted business operations to the "new normal," Margy answered, "I've never worked so hard to break even. We had to regroup and figure what we're going to do and how we're going to do it. We decided to focus on beans, rice, and other staple foods that people were really looking for in the beginning. As a matter of fact, for a couple of weeks I think we were the only ones who had any pinto beans and rice. We

became a kind of grocery market."

Once the demand for grocery staples dwindled, Tony and Margy decided to reopen for takeout only – which is how they've been operating since. Their stellar customer service and quality of food, however, remains the same.

"People are aware of the difference," Margy notes. "Consumers are educated, intelligent. Our constant goal is to make good food at a good price that can be enjoyed. What makes us happy and why we continue to work in this industry is the satisfaction that our customers show us every day we're open."

Regarding their tortilla factory, La Mexicana has gone back to humble origins and has scaled back their tortilla making business over the years. Currently, they have one locally-owned distributor and now only distribute throughout New Mexico. But if you are in the area, stop in and taste some of Albuquerque's history... and while you're at it – try their tamales.

Trust us on that one.

COVID-19 RESOURCES

UPDATED COVID-19 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The ED team has created a comprehensive resource guide with available Federal and State programs to assist businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. To view this document, please [click here](#).



October/November 2020

BUSINESS & PERSONAL RESOURCES - UPDATED

Listed below are available programs to assist businesses and individuals recover from the COVID-19 crisis. We have provided a break down of each, but please contact us directly so we can explain these programs even further and discuss next steps.

**CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE
SMALL BUSINESS GRANT PROGRAM**

The Albuquerque City Council has appropriated \$10 million of CARES Act funding for the creation of the City of Albuquerque Small Business Economic Relief Grant program. The program offers one-time grants up to \$10,000 to qualifying small businesses to cover payroll, rent, utilities, inventory, other necessary business expenses, or other direct business losses due to destabilizing events associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.