



Balloon Fiesta is an event that brings our community, city and state together to host thousands of pilots, volunteers and guests from around the world. When COVID-19 first began to impact our world and eventually our community, our non-profit organization held out hope to still launch our event this October. However, with only three-and-a-half months left until the planned start of Balloon Fiesta, there are many variables that are out of our control, potentially impacting the health and welfare of our attendees. The safety of our pilots, guests, sponsors, staff and volunteers has always been our top concern and in the wake of COVID-19 and its continued impacts, we must stay dedicated to upholding that commitment.

The Balloon Fiesta's volunteer board of directors and 20-person staff have brainstormed many different ways to make the 49th event occur this October. We've created various contingency plans and approaches but know that all of those fail if someone contracted COVID-19 as the result of attending our international event. For that reason, we are postponing the 49th Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta to October 2-10, 2021. Guest reservations, tickets and RV spaces will be unchanged and can be used for the 2021 event. We acknowledge some guests might not be able to join us next year, we respect your choice and have directions to accommodate other options on our website. Of course, we hope you will continue to support us by using your existing reservation for the 49th event in 2021.

For nearly 50 years, the Balloon Fiesta has been filling New Mexico skies with the brightest of colors, this will be the first year since 1972 that we will not hold an event. While saddened to postpone the event, we are excited about the future, flying in Albuquerque and supporting our many communities in 2021.

While the process for this decision has been thoughtful and extensive, ultimately the following factors most contributed to our decision:

- **Health & Safety:** Like the rest of the world, we are hopeful that the effects of COVID-19 will diminish. However, without a clear understanding of the status of this virus or the applicable New Mexico Public Health Order this October, we can't proceed with plans that could put anyone working at or attending Balloon Fiesta at risk.
- **Financial Responsibility:** The Balloon Fiesta is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, led by 24 volunteer board members and a year-round staff of 20. This year we were prepared to host more than 600 pilots, facilitate 1,657 RV reservations, coordinate with hundreds of sponsors, support more than a thousand volunteers, order 230,000 pieces of merchandise, as well as work with entertainers and concessionaires; it's an extensive process that requires a lot of planning. If we were to move forward with these steps,

and in the end not be able to have an event in October, it would put the event and organization in a very vulnerable position.

We are proud of the event Balloon Fiesta has grown into over the years. We know that there is an entire community, city and state invested in its success, making this the most difficult decision we've ever faced as an organization. This is certainly a setback, but we will remain committed to making this the best and brightest event in the world and can't wait to see Balloon Fiesta Park once again filled with balloons and smiling faces.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt W. Guthrie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Matt W. Guthrie,
President, Balloon Fiesta Board of Directors