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Five Republicans Run for Sheriff

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candidates from which to choose Maldonado's replacement in the June 4 primary. No Democrats have filed to run.

Among the candidates is former Sheriff Robert Gonzales.

Gonzales served as sheriff from 1976 to 1980, winning back-to-back two-year terms. Following his stint as sheriff, Gonzales started his own security business, Gonzales Security, which has been in operation for 22 years.

"I'd like to get back into law enforcement," Gonzales said.

While Maldonado may have held the job the longest, Gonzales is known as one of the youngest, at age 26, to have held the position.

Born and raised in Raton, Gonzales graduated from the town's high school in 1968 and at the time worked as a Raton Police Department dispatcher. He earned an associate's degree in law enforcement at Trinidad State Junior College in Colorado and worked six months for the New Mexico State Police before being drafted by the U.S. Army.

He served two years as a military policeman, returned to the State Police and a month later was tapped to be the Colfax County undersheriff.

Gonzales said all of his experience makes him the best choice to replace Maldonado.

"I'm what you'd call a complete package," he said. "I have the education, the experience and the knowledge."

Gonzales takes credit for bringing the department out of the "dark ages" by updating policies and procedures and initiating new practices and technologies.

If elected, Gonzales said he would work with the current staff to make the sheriff's department more accessible to the public. He also said he would be a working official and would spend some of his time performing the same duties as his deputies.

"I have to show the deputies I'm willing to do whatever I ask them to do," he said.

Other hopefuls

Three current deputies are looking for promotion to the top job.

Deputies Sidney Taylor, Lawrence Trujillo and Charles Duran and Springer Police Chief Eric Gonzales are all seeking the job.

Sidney Taylor has been with law enforcement in Colfax County more than 20 years. He served as an officer and as chief in the Raton and Cimarron police departments. He worked for the New Mexico Boys' School before joining the sheriff's office.

"I think I'm qualified for the job," he said. "I've had eight years in management by being chief and I know about the budget and how to manage people."

If elected, Taylor said he would follow up on citizen complaints and actively investigate crimes in addition to serving papers and transporting prisoners. Additionally, he wants to improve the relationship between the other law enforcement agencies in the county in order to better serve the public.

"I'm dedicated to the people of Colfax County and I want to help the people," Taylor said. "I'm here to help the people."

More than paperwork

Lawrence Trujillo said he wants to make an impact on the community as sheriff.

"I've always wanted to be put in a position where I could make a difference," Trujillo said.

Trujillo has 14 years of law enforcement experience, including his service with the sheriff's department, which began in 1997. He also was employed by the boys' school as a supervisor and with the Raton Police Department from 1983 to 1992. Following his 1979 graduation from Raton High School, Trujillo enlisted and served in the U.S. Marines until 1983.

He made his first bid for sheriff in 1992 but lost. He said he felt constituents believed he was too young for the job.

The sheriff's deputies primarily serve civil and court papers and transport prisoners. This candidate said he wanted to see that change if he is elected.

"I want the deputies to spend more time being law enforcement officers and to spend more time on the street," Trujillo said. "I've always been in a position of leadership and I have a strong work ethic," he said.

Quick thinker

The other deputy in contention for sheriff also said he believes he has what it takes to run the department.

Charles Duran was on hand when a tornado struck Cimarron in 1996 and again last year when a fire struck a local lumber mill. Additionally, he has advanced training in dealing with disasters. While disasters aren't common in Colfax County, Duran said the experiences have made him a strong decision-maker and able to think on his feet.

"I think that qualifies me to run the sheriff's office," he said. "I've seen what works and what doesn't."

Born in Springer, Duran is a lifelong county resident and has worked in law enforcement for nearly 20 years.

Duran said the sheriff's department needs a change in leadership and the officers need to refocus their attention on issues facing the county, including underage drinking and drug use. A strong community policing program would adequately address those problems, Duran said.

"I intend to use that to help the people in all the communities in the county," he said.

Both Duran and candidate Eric Gonzales have been involved with the Colfax Community Law Enforcement Academy. The academy serves as a public relations and information tool to educate the public about what law enforcement officers face daily.

A lifetime goal

Eric Gonzales, the Springer Police Chief for the past five years, said his youth and enthusiasm give him an advantage.

"Ever since I was a youngster I always had an eagerness and an enthusiasm to pursue law enforcement," he said. "This is a goal I've worked toward all my life."

Gonzales was born in Raton, where he graduated from high school in 1987. He completed his law enforcement training at Western New Mexico State University in 1991 and went to work immediately as the town marshal in Wagon Mound.

Additionally, he worked for the New Mexico Department of Corrections for four years and the boys' school for two years before joining the Springer Police Department.

He said that experience, as well as his service as chief, makes him the best choice for sheriff. Gonzales said he would use these attributes to move the sheriff's office into the public eye.

"I feel the sheriff's department needs more visibility and exposure," Gonzales said. "I want to make it a priority to keep the county residence informed about the department activities."

Gonzales said he wants to develop a Web site for the agency and an e-mail address so residents can freely communicate with the sheriff.

"I also want us to get more involved with other agencies," he said.

SAGE
about women
by women
for women
(and wise men)
FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

JOSH STEPHENSON/JOURNAL

FROM A DISTANCE: Elmer Young looks out over a less aggressive but still burning Borrego Fire on Monday. Higher humidity overnight Sunday and Monday helped tame the blaze.

Cooler Fuel Helps Slow Borrego Blaze

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rose from 15 to 50 percent. However, the area of burned terrain increased to 12,709 acres by Monday evening.

The scant amount of rain that fell Sunday evening on Santa Fe was more than what reached the Española and Truchas regions, according to National Weather Service reports.

In Santa Fe, Sunday's rainfall amounted to 0.03 inch. Light snow could be seen on the caps of Truchas Peak and Santa Fe Baldy. But weather stations in Española and Truchas reported no precipitation Sunday, according to National Weather Service reports.

On Monday afternoon, Fox saw storm clouds hanging over the fire's core.

"The best of our hopes and wishes did not come true," said National Weather Service forecaster Grady Svoboda. "I'm sorry we don't have any more optimistic stuff."

Svoboda said an 86-year-old Taos resident told him she doesn't recall New Mexico ever being this parched. He has heard that wells are running dry at residences in northern New Mexico.

A slight chance of rain is forecast for the fire region today.

Wind forecasts are trickier

RESIDENTS ONLY: State Police officer Brigit Hartz allows only residents and fire crews past a roadblock on N.M. 76 on the way to Truchas on Monday.

business. "The general area up there is not expecting major, significant winds," Svoboda said.

But he stressed: "The fire itself generates its own wind. That's totally its own world. We don't forecast for the Borrego Fire area."

On Monday, lighter winds and higher humidity weakened the fire, according to the Southwest Area Incident Management Team.

Under overcast skies, crews built a line free of brush around the fire's perimeter, in an effort to keep the fire from spreading. A spike camp, a temporary camp for fire crews, was established on the Carson National Forest, northeast of Truchas.

The fire workers, 808 personnel on Monday, numbered slightly more than those who worked Sunday.

The New Mexico Department of Health continues its recommendation that children and adults leave smoky areas, decrease outdoor activities and stay indoors.

Seesholtz said the fire could benefit the forest. Many areas did not burn hot, but instead burned across the forest surface. One result could be a regenerated aspen forest, he said.

Suspect Arrested In Theft At Lodge

Cimarron Woman Accused of Larceny

Journal Staff Report

A woman walking across the main street in Eagle Nest early Monday passed in front of a State Police officer.

The officer, Shawn Watson, not only recognized the woman but noticed she had something concealed beneath her shirt, Watson said Monday. That something was several thousand dollars taken from the safe of the Laguna Vista Lodge, Watson said.

The hotel owner, Bert Clemens, summoned by Watson, checked his safe and discovered a sum missing that matched the amount Diana Reese, a former hotel employee, was carrying, Watson said.

Reese was caught less than 50 feet from the scene, Watson said.

The officer took Reese, 39, formerly of Eagle Nest but now living in Cimarron, into custody and booked her into the Colfax County Detention Center on a charge of larceny of more than $2,500 but less than $20,000.

Watson said Reese may have been in town as one of thousands drawn to the area by the Red River Run, a biker rally in nearby Red River.

State Police Sgt. Robert Grona said he estimated approximately 5,000 bikers, including members of the Bandidos motorcycle club, in Red River over the weekend.

Grona said a motorcyclist driving drunk hit into a telephone pole at the intersection of N.M. 38 and U.S. 64 in Eagle Nest. He had no further information on the biker's name or condition.

Another motorcyclist, with his 14-year-old son as a passenger, took a curve wide on N.M. 64 near Eagle Nest and crashed head-on into an oncoming car, but both father and son managed to walk away without major injuries, Grona said. He said no alcohol was involved in that crash. The names of the two were unavailable.

JOSH STEPHENSON/JOURNAL

BETTER VIEW: Steve Thomas and his daughter, Deja, 5, commemorate Memorial Day at the Santa Fe National Cemetery.

Memorial Day Stirs Emotions in Veteran

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"It's not being a war lover, but you like the sense of adventure. You don't like it when you're there, but you like it when you read about it."

On Memorial Day, he wore his flight medic jacket, bearing a combat medical badge, flight wings and jump wings. His Desert Storm camouflage hat was studded with a Bronze Star he earned in Vietnam.

"I was an infantry medical respondent to a situation where a fellow soldier was wounded and I had to treat him in combat conditions," Johnson explained.

Military memories visit him daily.

"In a sense, I'm still a drifter, and I still live in a foxhole," Johnson said.

He keeps to himself, he explained, and he lives like he's ready for combat.

American War on Terrorism raises strong opinions in Johnson.

"I'm always following current world events because of being a veteran," he said. "Terrorism is a real sneaky way of destroying people and governments. You can never be on guard enough for something like terrorism. Every terrorist always seems to be one step ahead of you."

Johnson said the U.S. government should protect its people but give straightforward answers about the current military situation.

"They have this need to be secretive, which makes people resentful," he said. "And it makes the people in general very distrustful of government."

Weather

JOURNAL WEATHERLINE
Albuquerque ▲ 821-1111 Santa Fe ▲ 988-5151

Weather Center No. Radar, 98

SANTA FE FORECAST

TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
81/48 Partly cloudy	84/48 Partly cloudy	88/50 Partly cloudy	89/51 Partly cloudy	86/50 Partly cloudy

Partly cloudy skies warm today with isolated afternoon thunderstorms possible. Highs, low 80s. Skies will become mostly clear tonight. Lows, upper 40s. Skies will be partly cloudy through the end of the week with warm temperatures. A few afternoon thunderstorms will be possible Wednesday. Highs will be in the mid- and upper 80s.

YESTERDAY

PRECIPITATION

	Mon.	Month	Year
Total	0.03	0.05	0.58
Normal	0.05	1.13	4.25
Change	-0.02	-1.08	-3.67

TEMPERATURE

	Yesterday	Normal	Record
High	79	86	94 1964
Low	50	48	30 1947

TODAY'S TEMPERATURES

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