

GALLUP

Sept. 11 anniversary

Gallup marks 17th anniversary of Sept. 11 in solemn ceremony By Richard Reyes Staff writer
cops@gallupindependent.com

— On the 17th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Gallup continues to remember those who lost their lives and the first responders who made the ultimate sacrifice to help others.

The Gallup Fire Department hosted a Special 9/11 Memorial Ceremony at Fire Station No. 1, 1800 S. Second St., Tuesday morning.

On Sept. 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked four airplanes, crashing two into the World Trade Center buildings in New York City and one into the Pentagon in Washington. The fourth plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania.

Nearly 3,000 people were killed in the terrorist attacks, including a total of 412 emergency workers — most of whom were firefighters — who responded to the World Trade Center.

Gallup Fire Deputy Chief Jesus “Chuy” Morales, who led the ceremony, said that as the years continue to pass, there is one lesson from the tragic events of 9/11 that people can wrap their arms around: The idea of service.

For first responders, that means making the choice to take calculated risks to help others. But for the average citizen, it means being a good neighbor and steward of the community, Morales said.

“I feel it’s very important that we continue to recognize the bravery that was displayed that day,” Morales said.

‘We can never forget’

Gallup Mayor Jackie McKinney said he attended a flag raising earlier that morning

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Lt. Hector Resendiz with the Gallup Fire Department salutes and pays his respects to fallen firefighters during the Sept. 11 memorial ceremony marking the 17th anniversary Tuesday in Gallup.

Maggie A. Adams/Independent



Honor Guard Firefighter Ramon Guerrero rings the honor bell Tuesday morning during the reading of the timeline of the series of events on Sept. 11, at the 17th anniversary memorial ceremony Tuesday in Gallup.

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at a charter school with about 30 active duty personnel in attendance who have been building homes in the area through the Southwest Indian Foundation.

McKinney noted that the schoolchildren were not born when the Sept. 11 attacks happened, but he stressed how important it is for them to learn what it means to honor the flag, the country and the military.

“We can never forget,” he said.

McKinney also talked about the first responders who dedicate themselves to protecting citizens of the community, and he encouraged young people to be active members of the community as they grow up.

‘Our brothers and sisters’

During the ceremony, the Gallup Fire Department Honor Guard posted the colors and presented memorial wreaths while large banners displaying the twin towers hung from a fire truck.

As a tribute to their fellow firefighters, department personnel struck the Four Fives — the traditional ringing of a bell 20 times to announce a line-of-duty death.

After the ceremony, Battalion Chief Jon Dayton and Fire Inspector Eddie Guerrero said it’s important to keep the memory alive of those who died in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.



Firefighter Jeremy Mazon carries the New Mexico flag for the 17th anniversary memorial ceremony of Sept. 11, Tuesday morning at Fire Station 1 in Gallup.

Maggie A. Adams/Independent

“It’s something that has to be remembered,” Dayton said. “For us, those firefighters were our brothers and sisters.”

Dayton said he was a rookie when he came on duty at the Gallup Fire Department that day 17 years ago. He remembered everybody being on high alert at the Gallup Municipal Airport and Fort Wingate because they were not sure if there would be other attacks.

Guerrero was not yet a firefighter. He was working at his father’s bakery that day when he heard of the attacks on the radio.

Asked why he wanted to become a firefighter, Guerrero said he didn’t have an answer. He said he just always wanted to be one.

Dayton said his parents were county firefighters, so he grew up climbing on fire trucks ever since he was seven years old.

When asked about the Gas Max fire that sent explosions flying into the sky Aug. 1, Guerrero said he thought some lives might be lost, but he wanted to get to the scene to be with his brothers.

Dayton said part of their drive comes from an adrenaline rush and wanting to see what’s happening, but he said that when they are well-equipped and trained, fire doesn’t scare them.



Firefighter Ramon Guerrero and Battalion Chief Josh Bond present the Golden Ax and the American Flag during the Sept. 11 memorial at Fire Station 1, Tuesday in Gallup.

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