

Diana Barela Retires After 25 Years of Service

By Joseph Vigil, Public Information Officer, GSD



After reaching the 25-year career mark in State government, Diana Barela's choice to retire came easily as it aligned perfectly with the opportunity to spend more time with Kailani, her recently born, first grandbaby. Barela has been working in a dual role capacity as a management analyst for the Transportation Services Department and as an executive assistant for the General Services Department (GSD) cabinet secretary for the past two years.

Barela's State government career spans over three executive branch agencies. She began working for the Public Education Department as a Secretary 1 in May 2000. After a couple of years there, she went to work as an exempt executive assistant for the cabinet secretary of Economic Development, Rick Homans. From there, she came to GSD to work for Secretary Art Jaramillo and his deputies as a front office receptionist. Barela then moved to the Transportation Services Division, working as a management analyst for the past 16 plus years where she dealt with every state employee driver within the state of New Mexico - managing speeding, GPS, and drivers' license suspensions. Barela was also responsible for managing the vehicle abuse and commuting reports for state vehicles. Additionally, as the office manager, she took care of supplies, work orders for staff, managed records and archives, and anything else the staff needed.

“As Diana prepares to retire, we reflect with deep appreciation on the invaluable dual role she has played at GSD,” said Anna Silva, Acting Cabinet Secretary of GSD. “Her experience, institutional knowledge, and unwavering dedication have been a steady force behind the scenes - guiding, supporting, and ensuring our work ran smoothly every single day. Her presence will be greatly missed, both professionally and personally. We wish her all the best in her next chapter and thank her for her years of outstanding service.”

Barela says she is really looking forward to hanging out with Kailani and is looking forward to taking her on a family trip to Disneyland.



“I am also going to get back into my sewing and craft room,” said Barela. “I plan to take cooking, baking and maybe some Yoga classes to stay active and volunteer to read to the children a couple of times a week here at the state day care. I also plan to relax; she says with a laugh.”

Barela and her husband Chris, also bowl in a competitive league once a week, along with Carl Sandoval from RMD, who they coached in high school.

“Chris and I coached the Santa Fe High bowling team when our girls went there and won a state championship,” she said.

Barela says she’s going to miss all the great people she works with at GSD and has met here at the Montoya Building. She is also going to miss the actual work she did because she liked the fast pace of it.

'Everyone has been wonderful, and I have enjoyed working here,' said Barela. 'I will also miss the customers I dealt with. After 16 years of working with them, I got to know them very well.'

Barela said her greatest memory of working in state government was working with all the Spaceport stuff while at Economic Development.

'I had the opportunity to attend an event in Las Cruces where the Spaceport and Virgin Atlantic people attended,' said Barela. 'I helped with the press conference and got to meet Richard Branson, Victoria Principal and others who were going to take the first flight out of the Spaceport. I learned lots about the Spaceport as it was coming online.'

Not too far behind chasing retirement is her husband, Chris, the bureau chief for Surplus Property, where he has worked for 22 years.

'I told Chris I was going to retire after our daughter announced she was pregnant so I could help take care of the baby,' she said. 'Kailani now attends the state daycare where she's learning lots and interacting well there, so I will watch her for two days out of the week.'

Stephanie, Barela's oldest daughter and Kailani's mom, also works for the state in Early Childhood Care Department. Antonia, Barela's other daughter, works at the State Land Office doing grant writing. Barela's son-in-law, Jordan, (Stephanie's husband), works for Health Care Authority. Barela's father, who retired for the state of New Mexico, worked for Economic Development.

While Barela made managing a dual role here at GSD look easy, Kailani and her plan to keep her retirement at a nice, enjoyable, comfortable pace.