

Amber Dodson named director of NM Film Office

Adrian Gomez | February 25, 2020



Amber Dodson was named as the new director of the New Mexico Film Office. She takes the helm on March 9. (Jim Thompson/Journal)

The New Mexico Film Office is getting a new leader.

On Tuesday, Amber Dodson was named the director of the film office.

Dodson is currently the film liaison for the Albuquerque Film Office. She will begin her new job on March 9.

She replaces Todd Christensen, who is leaving the film office for the private sector. Christensen has held the position since May 2019. His last day will be Friday, Feb. 28.

Dodson will make \$107,681.

Christensen's annual salary was \$104,000.

Nick Maniatis, Film Office director under Gov. Susana Martinez, received \$87,000 a year. And Lisa Strout, who headed the office under Gov. Bill Richardson, was paid \$97,000 a year.

During his tenure, Christensen was tasked with rebuilding the Film Office.

"There were only three of us running the office for three months," he said. "There are seven people now, and it's

really coming together." Christensen said he is particularly grateful to have been able to help lay the foundation for the future of the Sen. John Pinto Native Filmmakers Memorial Fund. The fund provides \$100,000 each year in grants for Native American filmmakers registered with one of the 19 pueblos or four tribes of New Mexico.

"We put the (Sen.) John Pinto Fund out in January," Christensen said. "I want to stay involved with the pueblos and the culture to get more inclusion. I want to be more effective with this. I feel like that's one of the areas I want to concentrate on. I really think that indigenous stories are overlooked."

In recent years, the amount of work for the New Mexico Film Office has grown, because of an increase in the number of productions coming to the state.

While at the Albuquerque Film Office, Dodson launched initiatives to increase diversity and local engagement in the film industry, streamline and digitize film permitting, expand resources for local businesses and connect residents to job opportunities on productions.

Recently, Albuquerque was ranked No. 1 by MovieMaker as the "best place to live and work as a moviemaker" in the big cities category. It was the second year in a row the city received the ranking.

Albuquerque was also chosen by Deadline as the first location for its "HotSpots" series, which takes a look at filming outside Hollywood.

"I am excited to implement my hands-on industry knowledge and my experience in government and collaborate with the great team already in place at the New Mexico Film Office to showcase New Mexico and all we have to offer," Dodson said in a release.

Economic Development Secretary Alicia J. Keyes said Dodson has the leadership qualities that will put the New Mexico Film Office at the forefront of customer service and innovation.

"New Mexico has become a world-class production destination and Amber Dodson has shown she has the skills and vision to lead the Film Office as it takes on new challenges to be the best in the industry," Keyes said in a release. ■