

ALBUQUERQUE INTERNATIONAL BALLOON FIESTA®

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Inside the Basket- Brad Temeyer - Weather Team Chief at Balloon Fiesta

Brad Temeyer is celebrating his first year as Chief of the Weather Team at Balloon Fiesta. As Chief, he works to ensure the safety of balloonists participating in the event by leading weather forecasting for each session.

In this month's Inside the Basket, he discusses his love for weather and how it plays an intricate role in the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. From balloon crewing to meteorological support for the 2016 U.S. Women's Championship, Brad shares his favorite ballooning and weather experiences.



Give a brief description of your weather background and how you became involved with Balloon Fiesta?

Ever since I can remember, I have always been fascinated with aviation! I attended Iowa State University, graduating with a bachelor's and master's degree in Atmospheric Science. While in college, I began providing weather briefings for small regional hot air balloon events around the Midwest. Through the early 2000s, I continued to provide meteorological support for larger balloon events and speaking at FAA seminars.

While speaking at a seminar in 2007, I met a previous world champion who invited me to be a part of his team at the US Nationals. Thereafter, I was invited to support numerous balloon events including several US Championships, and to date, five World Championships. In working at these events, I had the fortunate opportunity to work along with some of the top officials in the world (many of which who are also involved with Balloon Fiesta), and was invited to be a part of Balloon Fiesta. In 2016, I lead the meteorological team at the US Woman's Championship in Rio Rancho NM, giving me my second opportunity to be a part of Balloon Fiesta (after crewing for a pilot in 2008).

2017 was your first year as Chief of the Balloon Fiesta Weather team. How did it go, what surprised you most about the job?

I had a wonderful time supporting Balloon Fiesta in this role!! Being a part of Balloon Fiesta, I had the opportunity to work with a very talented meteorological team, and top notch

officials. Given my previous forecasting experience in Rio Rancho, I was aware of the highly variable weather conditions around the Albuquerque metro.

With that said, I was surprised at how pronounced the winds that create the Albuquerque box are. There were several instances where the winds right near the surface to create the box would not develop until after the pilot's briefing near sunrise, but once it did, it stuck around through at least the mid to late morning hours. The localized effect is not captured by the forecast models, so forecasting changeable conditions is really quite a challenge! From a pilot's perspective, it looks incredibly fun to fly the famous Albuquerque box!

What was your favorite 2017 Balloon Fiesta moment?

This is such a hard question to answer as it was really a week of highlights being a part of Balloon Fiesta. I have dreamed of being a part of this event since I started supporting balloon events 20 years ago. There were many memorable moments from the week from witnessing the successes of our team, to conducting several live media interviews, working along with seasoned event officials, and being the assistant meteorologist for the gas balloon race.

What did you enjoy most about being in the position you were in, what was the toughest part?

I really enjoyed working with all the people to make Balloon Fiesta a successful event. To make a successful event, it takes months of planning and lots of communication. Even with the weather (something that is not predictable months out), we still work on refining our routine and developing plans in the event of an extreme weather event.

Once the event arrives, it is time to put all of our planning into motion. Since ballooning is dependent on the weather, our team is one of the first to arrive on site to begin planning for the day's activities. With events planned throughout the day, the job requires very long hours but it is truly a labor of love.

Do you have any advice for someone attending Balloon Fiesta for the first time?

This is an event which everyone needs to experience!! I would encourage people attending to come early and get involved!! When I was a crew member, I was shocked by the number of people that both watch and participate in the event. Bumper to bumper traffic is common in the pre-dawn hours around Balloon Fiesta Park. Make sure you have a plan on how to get to the park, and take in as much as you can. With so many events from the balloon launches, to the gas balloon launches, the glows and the amazing fireworks, it is really a magical event that is unmatched in the world.