

staff news

Rachel Courtney and Tamera Ahner Collaboration



Picacho Hills ribbon cutting with Liz Hamm holding the scissors and Rachel Courtney with the proclamation. August 4, 2017

HAPPY 5TH ANNIVERSARY to Rachel

Editor's note:

Rachel Courtney is celebrating five years of working with **Sonoma Ranch Life** and **Picacho Living**. Rachel not only serves as our Ad Designer, creating eye-catching print ad designs each month, but she is also our Content Manager. She is without question the most reliable person I know. She not only takes care of our publication sponsors and neighbors with love, care and diligence, but she takes care of me. Happy Anniversary Rachel! You're worth your weight in gold and each issue could not be better than the last without you!

– Tamera Ahner, Editor

Five years ago, I started my company, Pretty Nice Creations. I was living in Las Cruces, where I had been since 1991, working as a marketing director for a local retailer. I finally decided to take the plunge and start a company, and that's when Liz Hamm approached me about working with her to design ads for publication sponsors. I started with *Sonoma Ranch Life* and then quickly after that *Picacho Living* was born.

I really enjoy helping businesses – especially small businesses – reach their audience and communicate their story. I worked at the Las Cruces Bulletin as the production manager for eight years and before that at an El Paso TV station. These jobs were perfect matches to my bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communications (focusing on broadcast production and marketing) from New Mexico State and my certificate in digital graphics



technology (focusing on graphic design) from Doña Ana Community College.

In this moment that I am writing, I live in Wenatchee, WA. By the time this is published, I'll have relocated with my husband, Joel, and dog, Kara, to Broomfield, CO. I've been away from Las Cruces for three years, but still feel just as connected because of these magazines.

Since the launch of the magazine, I've gotten to know Tamera Ahner, who took over as editor from Liz Hamm. Don't tell anyone else this, but she's my favorite client. We have developed a synchronous relationship and are (typically) pretty great at balancing each other out. Two years ago, Tamera asked me to help our neighbors and sponsors with the stories they write for the neighborhood magazines, and I wasn't sure if it would be a good fit. Of course, it's another great fit with my journalism degree, and I am loving being able to help with the writing each month.

In my free time, I enjoy teaching crafting classes – alcohol ink, jewelry making, painting, and more – because it's a nice way to build community, increase skills without investing in supplies and make connections. The most inspiring comment I've gotten was from a woman who told me, "since my husband died, I haven't done any art. This is the first time and I think I'm ready to get back to it."

I enjoy taking photos, and I especially love fiber art. I relax by crocheting and have donated a few hundred blankets to Project Linus over the past 21 years. In the past few years, I started weaving and have found that that is one of my favorite ways to create. I also love learning and mixing different media (wire wrapping, weaving, gardening, whittling!) for one finished piece.

Thank you for all the great years, Picacho Hills and Sonoma Ranch! I can't wait to see what's in our future.

Pretty Nice Creations

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Tamera and Rachel at their very first lunch date.



Rachel with Liz Hamm