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Sunday, September 20, 2009

Play Your Card Right

By [Rivkela Brodsky](#)

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There is one more card you could add to your wallet. And to even things out, it may replace many other coupons you've been hanging onto for statewide savings.

"You don't have to carry a book of coupons anymore," said Katie Santillanes, special projects manager for the New Mexico Tourism Department.

The department, with the help of brochure distribution company Fun and Games Inc., unveiled a discount card this month that offers deals and savings at attractions, museums, restaurants and retailers around the state.

Called the Enchantment Card, this green card with an image of a yellow license plate reading "TOUR NM" is free to New Mexicans and tourists.

Santillanes told the Journal during an interview in Old Town on Sept. 11 that more than 400 companies have signed up to participate in the program. More are expected to join as the program grows, she said.

Some of the savings include 30 percent off at some Papa John's Pizza locations; buy one admission at the Albuquerque Biological Park and receive 50 percent off another admission of equal or lesser value; complimentary coffee with a "Breakfast All Day" entree at Flying Star Cafe locations; buy one Sonic Burger, get one free at participating locations; buy one round of miniature golf at Hinkle Family Fun Center and get one free; 20 percent off the Corn Maiden at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort & Spa, among many others. Local and national retailers are taking part in the program.

The idea is to offer savings to locals and tourists and boost business by bringing more people into retailers participating in the program.

"The goal of the Enchantment Card discount program is to increase the number of visitors — from both in-state and beyond — into our communities," said Michael Cerletti, secretary of the New Mexico Tourism Department, in a statement. "The program means more people traveling, shopping, eating, sightseeing and maybe even staying an extra night or two; and it will encourage people to go places they have never gone before and encourage former visitors who may not have been back in a while.

"Best of all, however, is there is no cost to the card user, and the only expense to the participating business is what it chooses to offer as a discount. Everybody wins," he said.

Julie Brown, owner of Tours of Old Town at 303 Romero St. NW, said

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she's hoping the card will bring shoppers down to Old Town. Her business is offering 15 percent off the tour admission price with the card.

She said the area has lost 25 retailers since the recession hit and the program may offer retailers some assistance, she said.

"People are still coming here but spending less," she said. "If they are saving, it makes those tourism dollars go a little further."

There are 26 Old Town businesses participating in the program, Brown said.

The card is free for locals and tourists. You must be 16 or older to receive a card and there is no limit on the number of cards a family can have.

A list of participating businesses and current offers is available online at www.newmexico.org/tournm. Those traveling to a certain part of the state can browse offers by area.

To sign up, visit the Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau's Visitor Information Center in Old Town, look for the state Tourism Department booth at the State Fair and the Balloon Fiesta or visit any Shell or Chevron station. You can also sign up online or call 1-800-733-6396.

"All of us — with the economy right now — don't want to stay at home," Brown said. "But we want to be smart about it."

Getting an Enchantment Card

The card offers discounts and other offers at participating businesses around the state. You must be 16 or older and there is no limit how many cards a family can have. The card is free.

Sign up at:

- The Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau's Visitor's Center in Old Town at 303 Romero St. NW
- The State Fair and the Balloon Fiesta
- Any Brewer Oil Co. convenience store in the state including Shell and Chevron locations
- Any Del Norte Credit Union locations in Española, Los Alamos, Santa Fe and White Rock
- At any state visitor's center
- By calling 1-800-733-6396
- Or online at www.newmexico.org/tournm. Those that sign up online will also receive a New Mexico vacation guide

More savings

Another card that offers additional savings at participating restaurants and businesses in Albuquerque, Corrales, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, Taos, Española and Los Alamos is the Albuquerque Journal Press Pass. The card gets you 20 percent off at over 200 eateries and discounts and other offers at participating businesses as well as special ticket offers. It comes free to daily Journal subscribers who pay six months in advance or who participate in a Payscale program in which the subscription price is automatically debited from a subscriber's account. Subscribers who only get the Sunday Journal are not eligible.

To see what businesses are participating in the Press Pass, visit abqpresspass.com. To subscribe visit ABQJournal.com or call 823-4400.

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