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New Mexico Film Office Announces Netflix Feature Film “Rez Ball” Begins Production in New Mexico

Santa Fe, NM - New Mexico Film Office Director Amber Dodson announced today that “Rez Ball,” an inspirational sports drama from Netflix, will be filming in and around Albuquerque, Shiprock, Belen, Los Lunas, Estancia, Santa Fe, Rio Rancho, and the Navajo Nation, with the permission and support of local governments and sovereign tribal nations, through May.

“Representation matters, and I am thrilled that so many Native actors, directors, and writers are being tapped for this production,” said Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham. “Growing the film industry is a priority of my administration, but it’s imperative that the industry is benefiting *every* New Mexican.”

The production will employ nearly 3,000 New Mexicans – 180 crew members and 2737 background talent - and is set to star Jessica Matten (“Dark Winds”), Julia Jones (“The Mandalorian”), New Mexico native Amber Midthunder (“Prey”), Kiowa Gordon (“Dark Winds”), Dallas Goldtooth (“Reservation Dogs”), Cody Lightning (“Echo”), Ernest Tsosie (“Better Call Saul”), and introducing Kauchani Bratt along with newcomers Devin Sampson-Craig, River Rayne Thomas, Jojo Jackson, Avery Hale, Hunter Redhorse Arthur, Henry Wilson Jr, Jaren K. Robledo, Damian Henry Castellane, Kusem Goodwind, and Zoey Reyes, as they tell the story of the Chuska Warriors, a Native American high school basketball team from Chuska, New Mexico. The team must band together after losing their star player as they fight for the state championship. It is an all-American underdog story of Native kids and coaches told from the inside out.



Photo by: Lewis Jacobs, Unit Still Photographer

“We’re thrilled to be home to this film,” Cabinet Secretary of Economic Development Alicia J. Keyes said. “Rez Ball,’ being filmed and set in New Mexico, will highlight our state’s diverse landscapes and rich culture while helping strengthen our local economy and provide job opportunities for New Mexicans.”

“Rez Ball” is directed by Gallup native Sydney Freeland (“Reservation Dogs,” “Growing Up”) and written by Freeland and Sterlin Harjo (“Reservation Dogs”) with inspiration from Michael Powell’s critically acclaimed nonfiction sports novel “Canyon Dreams.” Mauricio Mota and Katie Elmore Mota produce the film for Wise Entertainment (“East Los High”), Spencer Beighley, Jamal Henderson, and LeBron James for The Springhill Company (“Hustle”), and Nancy Utley for Lake Ellyn Entertainment. It is executive produced by Peter Chernin and Jenno Topping for Chernin Entertainment, Maverick Carter for the Springhill Company (“Hustle”), Scott Lumpkin (“Secret Headquarters,” “Reminiscence”), Freeland, and Harjo.

“This is a story that is so deep and close to me, and to be able to showcase our part of America with the world authentically is deeply gratifying,” Freeland stated. “We set out to make a film from an authentic point of view, and our incredible cast has brought Sterlin’s and my words to life in that way. Our actors, culled from over 5,000 submissions, embody the spirit and energy of what ‘Rez Ball’ is, and I can’t wait to share it with the world.”

“Rez Ball,’ an Indigenous story set in New Mexico, is being produced in New Mexico, directed by an Indigenous New Mexican from Gallup, and will be distributed by our state film partner Netflix,” Dodson stated. “Rez Ball is a testament to what a

sustainable, progressive, and inclusive film and media ecosystem is, and can continue to be in New Mexico.

Additional information on Netflix's local productions can be found at [NetflixNM.com](https://www.netflixnm.com), a new website making it easier for fans to find and explore unique Netflix filming locations in the Land of Enchantment. NetflixNM.com is the first U.S. site of its kind for Netflix and gives fans a chance to visit filming locations of popular titles like *Stranger Things Season 4*, *End of the Road*, *The Harder They Fall*, *Army of the Dead*, and *Daybreak*.

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