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Beef vendor to become new executive director at Santa Fe Farmers Market Institute

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Adan Manuel Encinias is the new executive director of the Santa Fe Farmers Market Institute. Courtesy photo

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The Santa Fe Farmers Market Institute plans to welcome a new executive director in April, following a second retirement for 74-year-old Andrea Fisher Maril, who became the organization's interim director in December 2020.

Aden Manuel "Manny" Encinias, 49, will be the 21-year-old institute's sixth executive director. He is the first man, first Hispanic and first Santa Fe Farmers Market vendor to serve in the role.

Encinias and his family, who raise cattle at their Buffalo Creek Ranch in Moriarty, have sold beef at the market since 2021 under the Trilogy Beef Community name.

Encinias has served on the farmers market's board of directors since about the time he became a vendor. He will step down from the board as he becomes the institute's leader, but the Trilogy Beef stand will remain at the market.

"The institute is one of the very few if not only organizations to save family farms," Encinias said. "It's most successful in holding together farms and ranches in Northern New Mexico. From a 30,000-foot level, I want to get more food grown in the 15 counties the institute serves on more people's plates."

His family has been in New Mexico for generations, he said. He and his wife, Corina, a fifth grade teacher in Moriarty, have seven children: six daughters and one son.

Encinias has a doctorate in ruminant nutrition from North Dakota State University and master's and bachelor's degrees in animal science from New Mexico State University. He serves on the animal science faculty at Mesalands Community College in Tucumcari and from 2002 to 2014 was a natural resource and livestock specialist at New Mexico State University.

The nonprofit Santa Fe Farmers Market Institute built and owns the Farmers Market Pavilion in the Railyard, and the Santa Fe Farmers Market is its primary tenant, with vendor leases bringing in a large portion of the institute's \$600,000 annual income. The institute also leases the facility to other organizations and draws donations and grants from foundations and governments.

The institute provides professional development for farmers, nutrition programs and a microloan program for vendors.

Encinias takes over from Fisher Maril, who had retired from her position as executive director of the Big Brothers Big Sisters Mountain Region in 2018 after 19 years. She spent more than two years in the institute's interim director position as it sought a permanent replacement. Fisher Maril came on board amid the coronavirus pandemic, when the institute's revenues had declined from a lack of leases at the Railyard building.

The search committee headed by board chairman Michael Knight was impressed by Encinias and his dedication to the network he has built in the ranching and farming community.

"His focus will be more external rather than internal to really put the institute on the map," Knight said. "For me, it's about having a presence and voice in the community, finding like-minded profit and nonprofit partners we can work with."

Knight cited as an example the Santa Fe Farmers Market del Sur, hosted by Presbyterian Santa Fe Medical Center.

The executive director position fits with what he has been doing most of his life Encinias said: "developing programs to protect the history and legacy of agriculture."

"I was raised to serve people, helping your neighbors," he said.

The incorporation of Trilogy Beef Community in March 2020 — just as the first COVID-19 cases emerged in New Mexico — allowed the family to distribute its own beef rather than relying on outside distributors.

"When you're in the business of sustainability and take care of your beef, we look to put our beef in the hands of people that respect our beef," Encinias said. "We like to work with small businesses that have the same respect of land and community that we have."

At first, he said, "we just wanted to be in restaurants with ground beef. Then COVID came along. We started feeding families. We were feeding 947 families in Indigenous communities in New Mexico and Arizona."

He knows there are many more Northern New Mexico ranchers and farmers who could participate in the Santa Fe Farmers Market, Encinias said.

"This opportunity with the institute is an ability to use my skills and network."

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Teya Vitu Business Editor

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