

## EAGA Business Builder

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## Today's speaker was Raul Rodriguez—Kings of Wrap



Mr. Rodriguez is first a family man. He has been married to Sandra for 41 years and they have two sons and three grandchildren. Eldest son Raul Jr. is a Freelance Graphic Designer at Amazon. Youngest son, Daniel, is Production Manager at Kings of Wrap. The elder Raul Rodriguez grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts. His family originally came from Puerto Rico in 1960. Raul is one of nine children (almost evenly balanced –five girls and four boys). Ever since he was a youngster, Raul has wanted to be a part of the graphics arts world. First, he attended a vocational school in Massachusetts to become a Graphics Designer. Then he went to the Art Institute in Boston. Then when their first child was born, Raul's priorities became more focused on providing for his family. An uncle was able to direct Raul toward the Research & Development Department of the Boes Company where he got a job as an Engineering Tech developing packaging. Raul continued to attend art related schools too. After about six years, Raul had an opportunity to work at Digital Equipment as a Maintenance Technician. While performing those duties, he would try to learn as much as possible about how the equipment worked, and the items that were produced. In late 1995, Raul heard that Intel was recruiting staff. He applied and was accepted to take a job at either Phoenix, or Rio Rancho. Not knowing much about any part of the country west of the Massachusetts state line, he chose Rio Rancho. The job at Intel was good, but in 2007 they had a major layoff. Raul's particular job was not part of that, but the management team of his group offered guidance that it would be good for their staff to work on developing other options in order to be ready just in case another round of layoffs came. Raul decided to go to CNM where he earned a Heating & Air Conditioning Certification. One evening, Sandra asked "If you are looking for something to fall back on, why not make sure that you will be landing in a place where you want to go anyway?" Ever since that first 'real job', Raul's work had some tangential relationship to graphics, or art, or design, but had not been in the Graphics Design World where he really wanted to be. Raul decided to take his wife's advice. He took some fine arts classes in Santa Fe. Then he bought a 64in wide format printer for \$1000. His thought was to create reproductions for artists. But, while embarking on that plan, Raul stumbled on the vinyl wrapping technology. He decided to take some training on how to wrap vehicles. Then some classes on free-hand air brushing of oil based paints; then Photo Shop courses. All of this was while he still had his day job at Intel. Raul even still has the Intel cafeteria napkin where he sketched his plans for the future. (Yes, people really do hand-sketch dreams on paper napkins). Then he began to dabble in wrapping vehicles. To expand that process, he bought a \$50,000 printer / laminator / plotter system and set up operation in a 12 x 24 space at his home. They would shuffle the machinery however the next part of a job direct. Move some way up against the wall in order to use the needed device. After dealing with the hectic activities in a cramped space for, what she thought was a reasonable amount of time, Sandra offered Raul some new advice: "Move this operation somewhere else". When Raul began looking for a building to rent, he encountered Phil Menicucci. Phil owned a building that Raul wanted to rent and they made a deal. Kings of Wrap now had an official place of business. For the next few months Phil would regularly stop by Raul's shop and constantly ask what they were doing; how did that part of the process work; what's happening over there. Then Phil offered to bring Raul to an EAGA meeting. He thought that both EAGA and Raul could benefit from a Kings of Wrap membership. Raul wasn't very excited to go that route and it took a lot of coercing before Raul finally agreed to come check it out. He remembers Phil's introduction of Raul as owner of "Kings of Wrap" must have sounded too much like "Kings of Rap" because the reception was cordial but a little reserved. Once Raul explained what his company did, the audience became a bit more enthusiastic. Raul did apply for membership and was accepted. That was 16 years ago. Over time his business, and space requirements, have increased. When Raul decided that he needed to have a larger building-preferable one that he owned, he found a facility that he thought would be good and sought Phil's advice about structure, location, etc. Phil was instrumental in getting the purchase transaction completed. Throughout the years, Raul has made some very beneficial decisions for his company. Probably one of the most important is becoming 3M Certified. The 3M company manufactures the industry's best vinyl products and Kings of Wrap is the only certified shop in New Mexico. When the coronavirus happened 3M actually directed customers to his shop and he acquired large clients like UPS, Lowes and Home Depot. Before a Q&A session erupted, Raul showed only a couple of examples of their work. The most impressive was an AFD firetruck that was fully wrapped in reflective vinyl. Because of the tedious process required, the job took nearly 3 months, but AFD came away with an amazing recruiting vehicle. Things learned during the Q&A session was very informative, but I suspect Raul had a few more examples of their work still available on the visual presentation. It would have been interesting to see more examples of their work. Perhaps I can talk him into providing some to share in the near future. No. I won't ask if ever thought of trying to be our King of Rap too.

- ◆ Jack Zipper has announced that he is stepping down as Membership Committee Chairman. His service has been exceptional in that probably always interesting, and probably often challenging, role. Thank you Jack for being there for the organization. Perhaps now you will be able to comfortably eat your Tuesday morning breakfast without having to guess whether or not you will be able to finish the bite before being called on to give a committee report.
- ◆ The new Membership Committee Chairman is John Menicucci. Thank you John for agreeing to take the position.
- ◆ Our Guest Speaker for January 28th will be Susana Corona—US Air Force. Colonel Corona is the 150th Special Operations Wing Vice Commander, New Mexico Air National Guard, Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M. She is a New Mexico native and received her commission upon graduation from New Mexico State University. As a lieutenant, her first operational tour was with the 8th Fighter Squadron providing intelligence operations data for mission planning over enemy territory. She deployed for Operation DESERT THUNDER with her Squadron. She deployed again with the unit which provided combat operations in Kosovo. As a captain she served as the Chief Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance officer, 601st Air Operations Center, aiding in the relief efforts after Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita. Colonel Corona has years of experience at the national level where she led collection management, open-source intelligence/classified all-source production and the RECON of worldwide sensitive chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive operations. She has over twelve years of acquisition experience in test, research, and development of Acquisition Level-I programs, to include the F-22 and Joint Strike Fighter.
- ◆ Second announcement of a new member application:
  - ABQ Headshots & Portraits
  - Representative: Johnny Carroll
  - Category: Headshot Photographer
  - Sponsor: J.W. Biava

If you have an objection to this company becoming a member, or if you have information that you feel should be considered during the review process, please contact our Membership Committee Chairman John Menicucci (Phone: 505-379-7083 or email: jam@bergerbriggs.com) as soon as possible.

## Badge Board Greeters

- Jan 28<sup>th</sup> Scott Peck—MP Group
- Feb 04<sup>th</sup> Terry Mack—Albuquerque Handyman
- Feb 11<sup>th</sup>
- Feb 18<sup>th</sup> Michael Kocurek—Atmosphere Commercial Interiors
- Feb 25<sup>th</sup> Kevin Lorenzen—Aflac
- Mar 04<sup>th</sup>
- Mar 11<sup>th</sup> Josh Schriber—Schriber Designs

## Scheduled Speakers

- Jan 28<sup>th</sup> Guest Speaker—Susana Corona—US Air Force
- Feb 04<sup>th</sup> Jarrod Taylor—Jinja Bar & Bistro
- Feb 11<sup>th</sup> Paul Jew—Moji Cinema
- Feb 18<sup>th</sup> Mike Krepfl—AAA Pumping
- Feb 25<sup>th</sup> Larry Sonntag—New Mexico Business Coalition
- Mar 04<sup>th</sup> John Jain—High Desert Doppler
- Mar 11<sup>th</sup>

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