

Sandia Snowshoe Classic returns for 22nd year

‘A good time for everyone’

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Every year for more than two decades, dozens of Albuquerqueans have stood atop the Sandia Mountains east of the city, snowshoes strapped to their feet, and trudged through a winter racecourse of frosted pinon, juniper and gambel oak.

On Jan. 24, 2026, this singular seasonal event returns for its 22nd year.

The Sandia Snowshoe Classic, as it's known, was founded by a group of locals. It has been sponsored since 2001 by Friends of the Sandia Mountains, a nonprofit dedicated to preserving the high peaks overlooking Albuquerque.

"We generally hold the race the Saturday after Martin Luther King Day, with 175 runners," said Mike Madden, Friends of the Sandia Mountains president and race director. "We have a volunteer crew of about 80 different people. High school students participate, not only on race day but as part of our committee and planning moving forward. There are prizes. It's a good time for everyone."

The race starts at 10,600 feet at the end of the Sandia Crest Scenic Highway, running for 5 kilometers (3.2 miles) through the Cibola National Forest and National Grasslands.

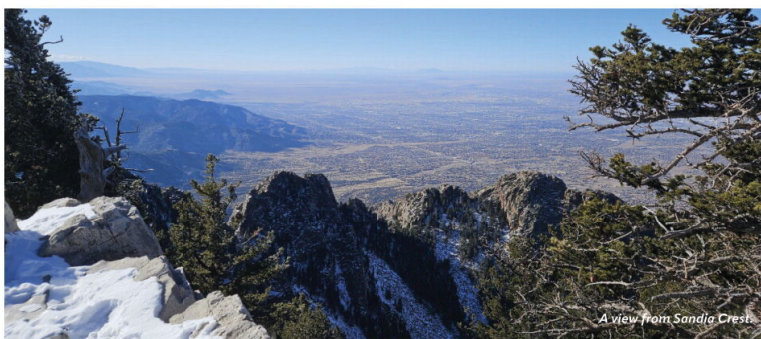
Sign-ups for the race are set to open in December, and racers are required to take their own snowshoes. The race fee is \$45 and includes food and swag. Participants must be 13 years or older and are bracketed by age in increments of 10 years. The top three male and top three female runners earn cash awards.

The top male finisher in 2025 completed the course in 25 minutes, 20 seconds, while the top female finished in 27 minutes, seven seconds, according to the Friends website.

The nonprofit, its sponsors and volunteers strive to host a safe, fun event that's become a longstanding winter tradition in The Duke City.

"For our organization, we just want to see the community get out on the snow and have fun," Madden told the Journal in 2024.

To register, visit runsignup.com. For more information, visit friendsofthesandias.org/.



A view from Sandia Crest



Participants race to the finish in a previous Sandia Snowshoe Classic. Photo credit: Paul Karas/Friends of the Sandia Mountains