

POSTAL

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employee.

Pichardo witnessed the growth of the city and, through his work, the technological advances that challenged him to adapt to changes.

"Before, for money orders, we used a machine where everything was more manual, we used more paper. Now, everything is digital. There have been so many changes. Before, you had to use several to complete the amount you needed for a package; now, it's just one. And when computers arrived, I had to take classes in Phoenix. Before that, all records were kept in books, by hand," he recalled.

Before working for the Postal Service, Pichardo held several jobs at now-defunct businesses that older generations may remember, such as the American Market, one of the positions where he honed his customer service skills.

Nevertheless, one of his greatest satisfactions is having served the nation in the Army for two years starting in 1968, when he was stationed at a base in Panama and later assigned to Vietnam.

That experience, he emphasized, not only gave him the joy of serving the country but also instilled the value of discipline, which has served him throughout his life.

"I had different bosses with different styles, but you have to adapt and follow the rules to do well. I came from a military service where discipline was strict, and I think that helped me," he stated.

Pichardo acknowledged that good customer service is an aspect that has been lost in some establishments, and this has to do with employees' attitudes toward their jobs and leaving personal problems outside of work.

"You go to some places, and it's like they don't see you. There's a lack of attention, at the very least. I've always said that the customer deserves the best you can offer, and to do that, you have to leave behind the little things that bother you and serve with joy, with love," emphasized Pichardo, who remained in his position as a customer service associate because he enjoyed interacting with the public, even though he had the opportunity to advance.

"It's inevitable to have problems at home or to be in a bad mood because

of the weather, but you have to leave that outside and always provide good service to the people," he reiterated.

He brought that spirit of service to the community, where he volunteered in Little League baseball, in the city, or at his church, where he has been part of a musical group for years, following his passion for the guitar, an instrument he's played since childhood.

With just a few weeks before he retires, he admits he's not sure what he'll do once he's in retirement.

"At least I'll walk and exercise. I don't know if I can

stay at home for too long, but I'll spend more time with my wife and family, and enjoy my four grandchildren more," he said.

"People always consider him a gentleman, and some call him 'Mr. Handsome,'" said San Luis Postmaster Larry Dean Sr., in a Postal Service statement.

"Since I've been here, I've seen older customers come in and wait in line until Salvador helps them. Salvador always arrives 15 minutes before his shift with a pleasant 'good morning' for everyone. When he finally retires, everyone will miss him dearly," Dean added.

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SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2024

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'For the long haul'

Salvador Pichardo, well-known postal employee of San Luis, to end 43 years of public service

BY CESAR NEYOY
BAJO EL SOL

A commitment to service and consistency are qualities that have been part of Salvador Pichardo's life during his more than four decades as a postal employee in San Luis, Arizona, qualities that have brought him many satisfactions, which he now treasures as he prepares to retire.

Pichardo, 75, will conclude a 43-year career with the Postal Service on Nov. 1, during which he became one of the most well-known figures in San Luis, recognized for his quality of service to the public, the result of doing his job with joy.

"For me, the key has always been to do your best at your job, but above all, to remember that we are pleasing God and must serve with joy in whatever role we're in," said Pichardo, who is



PHOTOS BY CÉSAR NEYOY/BAJO EL SOL.

SALVADOR PICHARDO AT HIS FAVORITE SPOT in the post office, the customer service counter. The well-known postal worker from San Luis will retire on Nov. 1, after 43 years of service to the federal agency.

also an Army veteran, having served two years in that branch of the military.

The Postal Service honored the native of Tijuana, Baja California, for his years of service to the federal agency, all of which he spent in San Luis, starting in October 1981 as a part-time

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SALVADOR PICHARDO, SAN LUIS POSTAL employee, whose career of over four decades was recognized by the United States Postal Service.