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Dorothys in training make silly poses with Lizza Monet Morales, center with her arm in the air, in front of the Ford #UNminivan. Morales is a Ford ambassador going on a road trip across Kansas to promote the #UNminivan. L&T photos/Victoria Calderon

By VICTORIA CALDERON

• Leader & Times

Ford ambassador and rising star Lizza Monet Morales rode into the parking lot of the Coronado Museum Tuesday to promote the new Ford #UNminivan and the City of Liberal.

The Ford's brand new Transit Connect Wagon, the official name of the #UNminivan, is sold as a five- or seven-seater vehicle which "combines style, efficiency and adaptability in an affordable package," according to the Ford Motor Company Media Center website. They sell for \$25,000.



To promote the car, Morales and Maya Murillo, both video bloggers, are taking a road trip around Kansas. The #UNminivan itself started its journey in Michigan and was driven down to Denver, which is where Morales flew in from California and Murillo from Arizona. The two women started their road trip to Kansas from there. Their first stop was Burlington, and then they headed to Liberal's Land of Oz.

"I think our whole goal for this trip was to pick out the beauty of Kansas and the Yellow Brick Road and make it our own," Murillo said. "The #UNminivan is really about showing your quirky side and your creativity and originality."

They named the bright red #UNminivan Toto in honor of Liberal and its tribute to "The Wizard of Oz."

Morales, a lifelong fan of the movie, has many job descriptions. She has been a bilingual reporter, brand ambassador, social media correspondent for special events (such as the Academy Awards), actress, singer, producer and much more.

According to her online biography, Morales was named after Liza Minnelli, Judy Garland's daughter. This was only because her mother's sister named her own daughter Judith, in honor of Garland, before Morales was born and Morales couldn't then be named Judith.

Murillo is a blogger for her website, MayaInTheMoment.com. She is primarily active on Vine, a social media app where users can create six second videos, and Instagram, which is for posting pictures. Both women blog about lifestyle topics, and will now be making travelogues of their adventures through Kansas.

In honor of the Ford Motor Company promoting Liberal and the Land of Oz, Mayor Joe Denoyer read a proclamation stating June 17, 2014, is now #UNminivan Day in Liberal. He also declared Morales an honorary citizen and handed her a key to the city, which she responded to very enthusiastically.



Among the prominent guests from Liberal who attended the #UNminivan's stop were Seward County Historical Society Board members Don Rash and Jim Rice, also a Seward County Commissioner. Rash and Denoyer were given a ride in the #UNminivan, and Rice was allowed to park it in front of the Yellow Brick Road.

Morales also got to meet seven young ladies who are in training to become Dorothys.

Morales and Murillo's stop in Liberal concluded with a tour of Dorothy's House and the Land of Oz by not one, but two current Dorothys.

"The Transit Connect Wagon gives people the freedom to explore undiscovered roadside wonders and memorable attractions, like Dorothy's House, the Wizard of Oz museum and the Yellow Brick Road," Denoyer said during the proclamation.

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