

Bustamante, McCartney face off. No SEC candidate for Catron

Story by [John Larson, El Defensor Chieftain](#) | Mar 31, 2022

<https://dchieftain.com/bustamante-mccartney-face-off-no-sec-candidate-for-catron/>

Socorro Electric Cooperative will be hosting its annual membership meeting on Saturday, April 23 at Macey Center on the New Mexico Tech campus. The main order of business is the choosing of three trustees. However, this year members will be voting for only one of the three Board of Trustee seats up for grabs.

The three trustee positions open are for District I, District IV and District V. Those seats are currently held by Paul Bustamante, Michael Hawkes and Anne Dorough, respectively.

The general areas for each of these districts are as follow:

District I – The northern portion of our service area from Escondida to Veguita. The current trustee for District I is board president Paul Bustamante, who is running for reelection. His challenger is Ward McCartney.

McCartney, who lives in the northeastern corner of the cooperative’s coverage area, said in an interview that he feels the board hasn’t done enough to find ways to lower the cost of electricity for members.

“The reason I want to be on the board is because the board has not questioned where they are buying the electricity from, and that would be Tri-State Generation and Transmission, and they haven’t made any moves to go with renewable energy,” McCartney said. “My main concern is a sustainable power future for our grandchildren.”

He points to the Kit Carson Cooperative out of Taos as a success story of how a co-op can serve its members best, by leaving Tri-State as a power supplier for Guzman Energy and construction of solar arrays. He said the Kit Carson co-op will be 100 percent solar powered during the daylight hours by the end of this year. This is McCartney’s second bid for trusteeship and the second time he has challenged Bustamante.

The incumbent, Bustamante, said he wants to work toward “restoring the alliance between local governments and the SEC ... through open, honest communication and ensuring viable solutions.” He said he will protect the membership from unscrupulous business practices, “by ensuring transparency in all business dealings,” and work to build member’s confidence in the SEC by addressing concerns, improve communication and work toward broader media notification, improve customer service and response times to concerns.

He said he will work to ensure affordable rates and a balanced approach to transitioning from traditional power sources to renewable energy and favors “continued scrutiny of the current contracted electric supplier—Tri-State, who is at present, providing 38 percent renewable energy and on target for surpassing the mandated 50 percent by 2024.”

Bustamante also wants to continue working with SEC management to provide dependable service to customers installing solar arrays. He also is in favor of working toward reliable broadband internet service to all SEC service areas through federal grants.

District IV – The southeastern portion of SEC’s service area stretches from Luis Lopez south and east along Highway 380. The current trustee for District IV is Michael Hawkes, who is not on the ballot this year. Former trustee Dave Wade of San Antonio will be seated by acclamation as the only eligible candidate who filed.

District V – The far western portion of the service area includes areas surrounding Datil, Pie Town, Quemado, and Fence Lake. This seat is vacant as trustee Anne Dorough elected not to run again and no other Members filed for this seat.

In a case like this, the board will be accepting 'letters of interest' from members residing in District V from which they will appoint a trustee to serve a full three-year term.

Information will be sent out soon to all SEC Members in District V notifying them of the vacancy and the opportunity to submit their letter of interest and a completed "Affidavit Declaring Candidacy" form.

All members will be able to vote on the race between Bustamante and McCartney, regardless of district.