

Hawkes, Bustamante elected new trustees

By John Larson - El Defensor Chieftain Staff Write April 18, 2019

http://www.dchieftain.com/news/hawkes-bustamante-elected-new-trustees/article_dcc7fdac-6213-11e9-9480-33439247e4d7.html

Although only 256 were needed for a quorum, no less than 462 co-op members converged on New Mexico Tech's Macy Center for the 74th annual Socorro Electric Cooperative membership meeting Saturday, where elections were conducted for three Trustee positions. Trusteeships from District I, District IV and District V were up for grabs, although District V incumbent Anne Dorrough was unopposed.

Final vote totals:

District IV

Michael Hawkes 1,011
Incumbent Dave Wade 519
Tony Jaramillo 312

District I

Paul Bustamante 754
Ward McCartney 554
Incumbent Lucy Baca 524

District V

With no opposition, Incumbent Dorrough retains her Trusteeship.

In regards to the ballot process, Dorrough, as President of the Board of Trustees, told members that on April 2 Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed HB 300 into law. The bill, "Allowing Mail-In Ballots to Count toward Establishing a Quorum," was sponsored by Rep. Gail Armstrong and Sen. Gabriel Ramos.

Dorrough said the new law is especially welcome news since "the long drive from the far western areas of the cooperative made it difficult for members to get to the meeting."

In a telephone interview Armstrong told El Defensor Chieftain she had been working on drawing up a bill since last year.

"This legislation was important to me, and our district, because everyone can still have a voice without actually having to be physically at the meeting," Armstrong said.

"Last session they came to me from the co-op and wanted me to think about running this legislation," Armstrong said. "What it does is allow for any co-op in the state to send out a mail-in ballot for the meeting. And it would count toward a quorum."

She said it benefits not only SEC but all cooperatives.

"We have some co-ops in New Mexico that haven't had a quorum since 1998," Armstrong said. In addition, the bill stipulates that mail-in ballots must be a part of a co-op's bylaws. Socorro's bylaws were changed in recent years to allow the mail-in ballot.

If there is not quorum of registered members at the annual meeting, the business part of the meeting could be dispensed with. The statute states that “if less than a quorum is present at any meeting, the majority of those present in person at any meeting may adjourn the meeting from time to time without further notice.”

This is also reflected in Socorro’s bylaws.

Dorough said the law will be followed at SEC’s 2020 membership meeting, and allow all mail-in ballots to count in trustee elections, regardless of the number physically present at the meeting.

Also at the meeting, members were given the cooperative’s 2018 Financial Report.

Total assets were \$74,628,649

Total liabilities and equity were \$74,628,649

2018 income was \$26,456,321

2018 expenses were \$24,657,248

2018 net income was \$1,799,073

As new Trustees, Bustamante and Hawkes will join Dorough, Luis Aguilar, Leroy Anaya, James Nelson and Don Wolberg at the next SEC Board of Trustees meeting; Wednesday, Apr. 24, at 2 p.m.

Meetings are held at 310 Abeyta Avenue, across from the DAV building in Socorro.