

# **SEC board needs to reevaluate its allegiance to Tri-State**

Letter to the Editor – November 20, 2019

Boy, a lot has happened this past week regarding the Tri-State Generation and Transmission relationship to the four state, 43 co-ops that currently receive electrical, mostly coal fired power from Tri-State.

Over three years ago Kit Carson Co-op (Taos) paid Tri-State \$37 million to buy out their contract. A month ago Delta Montrose electric co-op in Colorado, after asking the Colorado PUC to negotiate a realistic buyout cost with Tri-State finally settled and is finalizing the buy out contract this May 2020. The cost of the buyout will be disclosed at that time. Last week La Plata Co-op (Durango) after asking for a buyout price for four months, is asking the PUC to negotiate a fair price and last week United co-op (Boulder) joined La Plata. These three co-ops are the largest users of Tri-State power.

Sunday's November 9, Albuquerque Journal, front page started a three-part series on the Tri-State issue and Monday, the Socorro Co-op and the City of Socorro's proposed separation, made the front page. Co-op principle number four of the seven Co-op principles, Autonomy and Independence, Co-ops are autonomous, and any agreement must maintain their independence. Unfortunately your current and past Socorro Co-op boards have ignored that principle. This has lead the City of Socorro, I would say forced, the city to form it's own municipal power district. With the help of Guzman which will provide the city with far less expensive renewable energy, the cities residents will enjoy lower electric bills in the future. To illustrate Guzman loaned Kit Carson Co-op the \$37 million to buy out it's Tri-State contract. In six years, less than three remaining, Kit Carson will have paid off the \$37 million without raising its rates to co-op members by purchasing less expensive renewable power from Guzman . That's a \$6 million a year savings.

When Kit Carson Co-op asked and got a buyout cost from Tri-State, it was brushed off as, you know, it's Taos.

But now that the three largest co-ops are following Kit Carson's example, as well as the City of Socorro. It's time our Socorro Co-op board seriously reevaluate its blinding allegiance to Tri-State.

It's time to join with the city and make a rapid shift to less expensive, less polluting, renewables and follow Kit Carson's 100% daytime solar battery storage example.

This would create local jobs and local taxes and make Socorro Co-op truly independent again.

**Ward McCartney III**

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