

041011-annual meeting comments

All SEC meetings are odd but last night's meeting was strange in many ways. The cynic summed it up well. "No quorum - No meeting - No voting."

That is the gist but other particulars are worth noting. The quorum was 292, members present 239, votes cast by mail - 121. We missed the in person requirement by 53.

The short fall might be blamed on the terrible wind (70 miles per hour gust near Magdalena according to the late news) or a sense of futility as one man put it in less polite terms but when members from Quemado almost outnumber members from the city of Socorro, you have to wonder. The members from Quemado had a round trip of over 210 miles to attend the meeting in Socorro and they ran into a snowstorm on their way home last night. Red Hill has a longer trip, Pie Town, Datil, and Magdalena have a shorter distance to drive but the 5th District was out in force. Maybe we need to rotate the venue for the Annual Meeting. We definitely need to make the votes by mail count as part of the quorum count.

We do not know the results of the vote on Wolberg's Redistricting Plan but from a lot of the comments including those of some county officials, there is no way that it would pass muster in the real world. New Mexico law requires that the number variance among voting districts not exceed 5%; federal law calls for less than 10%. The proposed plan has a 20% variance. The numbers finally came to light in Wednesday's "Chieftain." The Plan adds up to a total of 11,293. The number of members as of April 9th - 9,738. Where did that extra 1,555 come from and why? Redistricting is not a job for amateurs. We need to hire professionals so that the members can trust the outcome.

Welcome changes were the simpler and less expensive refreshments, the absence of armed police or security guards, the lack of fuss about the filming and taping of the meeting and informational handouts, the stripped down events, gift bags, money giveaways, etc. No one missed the frills.