

Two letters in the 12/1/12 Defensor Chieftain

Information requests ignored

Editor:

Recently we received a flyer from the Socorro Electric Cooperative. It was their attempt to gather information. Ten thousand were mailed at a cost of \$7,000. Out of the 10,000 only 49 were returned, so the cost per flyer would be \$140 each. With so little response, what information can they ascertain?

We have repeatedly asked for information about the SEC spending practices but have been road blocked or flat denied, their reasoning being it costs money.

The board recently passed a ruling that if you go in and ask for information it will cost you \$1 per copy. The Chieftain was asked to pay close to \$100 for public information that is made available for free at meetings of the Socorro County Commission, City Council, etc. This is beyond highway robbery, it is an attempt to discourage anyone from looking into the matters of the member owned S.E.C.

Prior to all of this, I had asked the general manager to see about putting everyone's district on the light bill — that way folks would know who to vote for and what district they were in. I was informed that it cost too much money for the software. Do you imagine it costs more than \$7,000?

Also, FYI, at the last SEC meeting our new board member from Catron County was in the audience. Mr. Wagner asked if she could be seated on the board immediately. Catron has not had representation since April when we went to a five-member board. The board's response was a resounding "no" and they also declined to certify the District 5 election even though they had the election summary, the official results and media breakdown. Even with all the media coverage and court intervention, the SEC board is still not complying and just being a bunch of thugs. Hope to see you at our next SEC meeting.

Charlene West

Lemitar

Co-op members investigate

Editor:

In the weeks since the District 4 election, Gayl Dorr and I have been looking into the procedures that were in place for that vote. There seems to be a wide assortment of problems.

Earlier this year, when the members were divided into five districts, each district was to be just under 2,000 voters. The co-op's own website lists District 4 as having 1,993 members. Since mail-in ballots are not permitted, a post card mailing was done by Survey and Balloting Systems, a third party, neutral firm. They worked from a list provided by the co-op. Only 1,648 names were given to them, according to their sworn count.

Previously, Gayl Dorr had asked for a list of District 4 members and was given a list with 1,605 names (no addresses). The voting sign-in books at the meeting on Oct. 6 had more than 2,600 listings. Many of these were duplicates, such as Fish and Wildlife, BLM or other government groups. Even allowing for this, and members moving etc., the wide disparity in voter numbers made it worth a careful examination of all the signatures.

We found more problems. At least one signature and address was for a property outside of District 4. Several voters voted for their residence but were also given a second vote for a security light or a pump. Under current bylaws this is not allowed.

There are also examples of proxy voting, someone else voting for a person who did not attend. This is also not allowed under the bylaws. There are places where a person voted but were not required to sign the voter role. A few of the business votes, within the city limits, are not backed up by a city business license. Some even seem to be imaginary, yet they voted. The mail-in ballots for businesses did not include any instructions for sending an affidavit, while in person business voters were given one to sign.

With all these irregularities, a full audit of this close election is appropriate. As the contract with Survey and Balloting Systems says they cannot be held liable since they can only work with the information they are given. The number of these discrepancies makes the results suspect. To resolve this situation the election should be overturned and the member owners given an opportunity for a fair and honest vote.

Marie Watkins,

San Antonio