

Nov 6, 2014 **Letters to the Editor**

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SEC members have right, duty

This Saturday, Nov. 8 and next Saturday, Nov. 15, the Socorro Electric Cooperative District Two and District Three annual members' meetings will take place. It will be the last chance consumers of SEC have to impose on the co-op's management needed changes to bring down the cost of their electric bills and force management to change the co-op to the member friendly organization implied by the word cooperative.

Although quorums were achieved during registration at annual members meetings in both 2012 and 2013, unreasonable decisions made by the co-op's lawyers prevented amendments approved by majority vote of the membership registered from going into effect. The lawyers failed to recognize New Mexico corporation law.

This was true of amendments proposed during the 2012 District Five meeting and the 2013 District Two and District Three Meetings, but we members failed to show up in sufficient numbers (approximately 300 members) to constitute a quorum registered in attendance for the 2014 Annual Members' Meeting. Should we fail to register quorums at these two meetings: 1.) District Two, 1 p.m. Saturday, Nov.8 at Magdalena School Fine Arts building; 2.) District Three, 1 p.m. Saturday , Nov. 15 at Finley Gym, and the 2015 annual meeting of all the members this Spring, the glimmering light of reform we have faithfully pursued so long will dim.

Why is this important?

The widely held perception by our political and community leaders as well as the vast majority of the co-op's consumer-owners is that neither co-op president Anne Dorough, vice president Dave Wade and secretary-treasurer Leo Cordova, nor their pampered, mostly absent, rookie general manager Joseph Herrera, seem to know or care about what's going on.

The public, including member-owners are at once conflicted, and pleased by various unfounded reports that the Mayor of Socorro wants to take over management of the co-op. Confusion is based on the question that in that unlikely event, who would provide power to co-op members not in the city's area of operation.

Pleasure would be the reaction of all those who have been frustrated by the higher than necessary prices, misleading and false claims by management, poor employee relations, lack of cooperation and accountability of management. I believe most consumers blame incompetence and lack of interpersonal skills of the manager as well as the board's president for the perception that the members must be punished and that their right to democratically control the co-op must be prevented at all cost.

That cost is well recorded in the failed suit of the members in 2010 and unnecessary sums spent by management to the lawyers for political advice and tricks which have nothing to do with providing electricity, operations or risk management.

Member power is important. The right of member-consumers is as much a duty as a right.

Under these conditions it becomes more a duty. At these district meetings we can: propose needed changes to the bylaws to have the membership remove attorneys and management that fail to conform to cooperative principles, establish fixed dates for annual meeting and fixed locations; require written reports from management to account to the membership; eliminate the need and cost for public relation firms to write false or misleading reports to members; and lower legal cost by curtailing management's symbiotic dependence on self interested lawyers to protect it by providing information it should already know.

Civic leaders and members throughout the service territory have been discussing remedies to solve the co-op's problems so there are many more proposed bylaw amendments ready for debate and deliberation by members at these meetings. We must have quorums so bring your relatives, friends and neighbors who are members.

The purpose of these meetings is to provide the board of trustees with orders of what we require them to do. We the members choose by majority vote what must be placed on the notice of the 2015 regular annual members' meeting for the entire membership to enact, a quorum being registered.

If you are truly concerned for the future of your co-op use your voice and your vote to bring order and good management to your cooperative. This is a must attend event.

Sincerely,

Charlie Wagner

Trustee