



THE TAOS NEWS

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MY TURN

Your local electric coop at work

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On Dec. 14 the New Mexico Public Regulation commission held a preliminary meeting regarding the possible formal hearing for the proposed Kit Carson electric rate increase.

In attendance were Luis Reyes and seven of his rubber-stamp board led by the Chairman Bobby Ortega, Francis Córdova, Bruce Jassman, Art Rodarte, Jerry Smith, Chris Durán and Ambrose Mascarenas.

In his effort to get the commission to approve the rates without going to a formal hearing, Luis was trying to blame the large number of rate protests on a few disgruntled former employees and activists. This is the furthest thing from the truth as I myself turned in 10 protests.

There was only commissioner Chávez to represent the protesters. I arrived late because I could not find someone to take care of my dad whom I am a full time caregiver for, but even with that responsibility I managed to get my dad in the car and take him to Santa Fe with me.

A staff member had previously informed me that they were going to hear the Kit Carson case as number 16 on the agenda but as they often do they moved it up on the agenda without informing anyone. Noticeably absent at the PRC hearing were Virgil Martinez and Luisa Mylet the only two board members to vote against the rate increase.

It is important to note that had Commissioner Chávez not been there to refute what Luis was putting out there the PRC may have granted the rate increase without a formal hearing.

Hooray for the Public Regulation Commission for it was not buying any of it as it set a formal hearing date of Jan. 10 at the Public Regulation Commission hearing room. It is important that if you submitted a rate protest on the Kit Carson Electric rates that you make an effort to attend the meeting on the 10th.

I hope that the PRC informs the protesters of record of this hearing date but if they don't, as I suspect, that they won't so let this be your call to attend.

One of the protesters is the Taos County Commission who represent about 30,000 people in the county but because the county stood up to Mr. Reyes.

Guess what? The co-op is now telling the County that the design for their electric service entrance does not meet RUS loan requirements.

The RUS does not have any such requirement; the electric service entrance is governed by the national electric code. But because the county stood up to Mr. Reyes all of a sudden there is a problem with the metering cubicle design.

If there was a problem Kit Carson should have informed the county 18 months ago when architect drawings were approved. It is true that the new design is a better installation but the county should have been informed 18 months ago not now when the building is close to completion and it will cost the county money and delays in the project.

The bulk of the protests center around the constant adventures into outside business ventures and the unfair structure of asking people who conserve energy to pay a higher utility bill. Also unfair is the whimsical increase in the customer charge to \$20.50.

What is really sad is that Luis and the board do not get that people in general are fed up with the tax and spend policies of the co-op.

They all must have been asleep when the town of Taos tried to pass a gross receipts tax a couple of months ago without the vote of the people.

Fortunately, 381 petitioners forced the mayor and Town Council to rescind the tax before it was implemented.

People have had a belly full of these tax-and-spend boards whether it's the town, the school board or the Kit Carson Co-op.

Jerome Lucero is a retired electrical engineer who worked for Public Service Company of Colorado or its subsidiaries for 28 years. His job these days is to take full time care of his dad, a former employee of both Mora San Miguel Electric and Kit Carson Co-op.