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Co-op updates members at 2024 Annual Meeting *New board member elected to represent District 5*

GRANTS, N.M. – Highlights of Continental Divide’s 2024 Annual Meeting included the expansion of Red Bolt Broadband to residents of San Mateo and La Jara Subdivision on Oso Ridge and a summary of infrastructure improvements across the co-op’s service territory.

Continental Divide Board President Keith Gottlieb called the meeting to order at 8 a.m., Sat., April 27, inside the new gym at Grants High School. Registration of the members began immediately at that time, along with the annual Cibola General Hospital Health Fair.

During the co-op’s business meeting, Gottlieb said Continental Divide continues to urge state and federal lawmakers to overhaul permitting, siting, and funding of new electric generation, transmission and telecommunications projects to make their construction more efficient and their completion timelier.

“The billions in federal money made available in 2022 through the Inflation Reduction Act cannot overhaul the use and development of energy, as was intended, without massive regulatory reform,” Gottlieb said.

He added that Continental Divide successfully lobbied against a bill that would have required electric co-ops and their members to grant for-profit utilities and telecommunication providers access to co-op poles and easements without fair compensation. “Not only would it drive up costs for rural electricity, but it could also jeopardize safety and reliability,” Gottlieb said.

The co-op’s board president and its chief executive officer Robert E. Castillo both provided updates on new technology Continental Divide continues to pursue to modernize its operations, be more cost-effective and enhance customer service.

“I am also excited to announce that our Red Bolt Broadband division is in the process of implementing an Outage Management System similar to the OMS launched on our electric side last year. Soon, subscribers will be able to receive email and text alerts on service disruptions,” Castillo said.

Continental Divide is working with the New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperatives to apply for grant funds to assist with deployment of advancing metering infrastructure (AMI) technology and its Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) System.

“AMI is critical to full operation of two of our SCADA system and our Outage Management System (OMS) to enable our workers to locate line faults more quickly during power outages and make power delivery even more reliable,” Castillo said.

Several of the co-op’s guest speakers, including Todd Telesz, the chief financial officer for Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, were unable to attend the meeting because of the train derailment that shut down Interstate 40.

Continental Divide did not take any official business actions during the business meeting. The co-op registered 534 members, and it needed 539 to establish a quorum.

“We were so close that it hurts,” Castillo said. “But we are that much more appreciative for the membership that came out and showed support, given the inclement weather and the I-40 shutdown.”

Three percent of the co-op’s membership needed to register to act on past year annual meeting minutes, as well conduct an election on two proposed bylaw amendments: To allow the co-op’s governing board to periodically revise voting districts and to reduce the annual meeting quorum to 2.5% of the membership.

Current board member Blanche Clawson was unopposed and achieved a second term as District 6 trustee. No candidates ran for the District 8 seat. The chair has been vacant since the passing of its former representative, Lyle Adair, in late 2020.

Ben Chavez of San Rafael was elected to the District 5 seat, besting candidates Cody Chavez and Tyrra Saavedra.

The winners of the grand prize drawing were Nancy Quintana and Harding Polk. Quintana won a trip for two to Las Vegas, Nev. Polk won the \$1,500 cash.

Dakota Gage, a senior auditor with auditor Bolinger, Segars, Gilbert & Moss, LLP, reported a clean bill of financial health for Continental Divide with total revenue of \$68.7 million in 2023, compared to \$64.7 million in 2022. Total expenses last year were \$65.8 million, compared to \$63.6 million in 2022.

More information can be found in Continental Divide's 2023 Fiscal Year Report. Access the report online at cdec.coop The report also will be published in the July edition of *enchantment* magazine, which is mailed to the co-op's nearly 18,000 members.

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