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New Mexico Notes

New Mexico on November 2nd made history by electing the first female Governor in New Mexico as well as the first Hispanic female Governor in the United States. Republican Susana Martinez is the current District Attorney for the city of Las Cruces, New Mexico. New Mexico also elected for the second time in history a Republican Secretary of State. State Senator Diana Duran won over incumbent Democrat Mary Herrera, who has been plagued by allegations of wrong doing, favoritism, and retaliation against employees who reported wrong doing to the state.

In the New Mexico Legislature, Republicans gained 8 seats all defeats for incumbent Democrat legislators. The votes in the House will now be 37 Democrats to 33 Republicans. This is the most Republicans in the House since 1929. There were no Senate races so the Senate is still controlled by the Democrats 27-15. One of the Democrats defeated was 7-term House Majority Caucus Chairman John Heaton from Carlsbad, New Mexico. There could be a run at a new Speaker and leadership for the Democrats and possibly some votes that could pull conservative Democrats to support Republican legislation.

The election has caused a new set of dynamics for the New Mexico House as now there will be a higher percentage of Republicans in each of the committees and the House Minority Leader, Tom Taylor, said "The fact is, we will really have a say in the House of Representatives. We will no longer be spectators."

Constitutional Amendments that would allow county politicians to serve more terms and to allow legislators to be appointed to political positions were all soundly trounced by the voters.

This was also a key election because redistricting comes up every 10 years and Susana Martinez will be overseeing that this year.

In the Congressional races, two of the incumbent Democrats, Ben Ray Lujan (Tom Udall's old seat) and Martin Heinrich (Heather Wilson's old seat) held on to their seats and one Democrat, Harry Teague, lost to a former Republican House member, Steve Pearce.

It really didn't matter who won or lost, the one thing that came out of this election was a record amount of mud-slinging on both sides and the results of an angry American voter should give all politicians a message that we are for smaller government, less spending, and less government intrusion on our private lives.

Heading up Governor-elect Susana Martinez' transition team is former Congresswoman Heather Wilson. The governor will face a monumental task; the state is looking at addressing a \$180 million shortfall for this fiscal year and an estimated \$300 million for fiscal year 2012. Martinez ran on "I will not raise taxes for the first term if elected as governor." With Education and Medicaid taking up about 70% of the general fund budget, it does leave much wiggle room to downsize enough to make \$300 million. The past two years we have reduced spending by \$500 million so it can be done but this year's cuts, I think, will have to come from creative thinking.

Upcoming Events

The 2011 NMPMA Convention and Trade Show will be held August 30 and 31, 2011, at the Embassy Suites in Albuquerque. Please mark your calendars now.

On behalf of all of the NMPMA members, have a Merry Christmas and Prosperous and healthy New Year. Feliz Navidad!