

Untitled

Commission Meeting

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Comments:

Sandoval County Commissioners:

I just learned that the Sandoval County Commissioners are proposing closing our La Madera Volunteer Fire Department, LMVFD. As I understand it, this will include terminating all 22 of our volunteer fire team, forcing them to surrender their gear, disbursing the LMVFD vehicles, and removing the best asset for rapid fire and emergency response for this area. This is being done without any consultation with the public. In fact, I first learned of this through the internet information service "Next Door". Then, yesterday afternoon, I received a notice from the SPCE Board of Directors that a final decision on this proposal was being made this Thursday night by the County Commissioners. I am appalled by the lack of concern of the County Commissioners for those of us who reside in the East Mountains. Some of our volunteers have already been "fired," when, you, the County Commissioners, have yet to make the legal decision. The LMVFD has been instructed that it needs to turn over its equipment immediately, while the County has 90 days to provide substitutes. What happens to emergency response during the 90 days with no equipment?

I am not terribly surprised by this action by Sandoval County, for they have consistently treated our community in the East Mountains like ugly step children, and use us only for tax revenue without any serious effort to support and shelter us, even though that is the job each of you pledged to do when you were sworn in. To show how little Sandoval County supports this community, let me make the following observations:

1. When Aquifer Science proposed to take 1,500 acre-feet of water from the Sandia Aquifer, Bernalillo County stepped up to assist us in legally resisting this application. Sandoval County did nothing, For the past 10 years, we have been fighting this battle with no assistance from our own County. None! And we still provide our own water with wells which we paid for. With no County assistance, we have successfully fought off Aquifer Science who has spent millions of dollars attempting to get water rights when the Office of the State Engineer has ruled there is no water to allocate. Bernalillo County was extremely helpful, but no help came from Sandoval County.
2. The County tried to open up oil drilling operations with almost no protection for areas where the ground water would be jeopardized. It was a pitiful ordinance in which we were never consulted. We had to fight Sandoval County to get them to remove their proposed ordinance and put appropriate restrictions in place, with input from the East Mountain community. Even in this, we did the heavy carrying.