

Voters Have a Chance to Move New Mexico Forward

By State Senator Pete Campos

Voters will have an opportunity in November to approve more than \$122 million worth of construction projects and purchases that will benefit New Mexico's senior citizens, college and university students, library users and kindergarteners. This general election will not only decide important national, state and local leadership positions, but it will also decide whether we will be able to improve area senior citizen centers and Luna Community College and New Mexico Highlands University.

These projects will be financed through general obligation bonds authorized by the legislature during the 2004 regular legislative session. Residents shared their views and my legislative colleagues and I listened. Approval of this bond issue by voters will help continue the progress we've made in New Mexico by providing the infrastructure and educational system necessary to spur economic development.

This area of New Mexico will benefit directly from the bond issue. Included among the list of projects is funding for improvements to La Loma Senior Center, Puerto de Luna Senior Center, the Santa Rosa Senior Center and the Pecos Senior Center. Area college and university projects include improvements to the Luna Community College's business occupations building, improvements to LCC's electrical and energy systems, improvements to the dormitories at New Mexico Highlands University, renovations to NMHU's science building and annex, and other infrastructure upgrades.

I believe we can continue to make a positive difference for the young people who are going through our local educational system, but it is going to take a majority vote of confidence to pass the bond issue scheduled for the upcoming general election.

Nearly \$6 million in bond proceeds was authorized by the legislature to purchase books and other materials for public libraries across the state, nearly \$4 million was authorized for college and university libraries and more than \$6 million was authorized for public school and juvenile detention facility libraries.

Finally, \$5 million was authorized for kindergarten classrooms, including those in the West Las Vegas Public School District.

These projects are critical to our future as a state. This bond issue is a result of a commitment to invest in rural communities and provide the base for families to have economic and quality-of-life reasons to stay at home. The education of our children in well-equipped, well-maintained and well-constructed classrooms, schools and libraries is the foundation of our economic development plans. Educated and motivated students grow into educated and motivated workers and business owners. And, we all know how important it is to our quality of life and our sense of community to have safe and well-equipped senior citizen centers so that our retirees have places in which to gather, socialize and enjoy a good meal. The strategic and aggressive approach we have taken to improve our communities has brought forth great benefits. We have better paying and more secure jobs, new and remodeled public facilities and badly needed upgraded infrastructure.

The legislature recognizes how important it is to spend money now to help ensure that our future is bright. When we can keep people employed here at home, they tend to spend and save their earnings locally, support their churches and lead lives as positive role models encouraging their children to study hard, live alcohol- and drug-free and prepare to someday earn good incomes.

I'm confident that voters will see the wisdom in that as well and, in November, will approve the issue of these bonds. As role models, let's emphasize a positive way of life for our children and wholeheartedly sacrifice so that we can provide them with the tools it will take to be highly competitive when it is their turn to work and care for us.