

Tomorrow's Leaders Must be Nurtured Today

By Senator Pete Campos

The next generation of leaders is moving into positions of power and responsibility in New Mexico. Members of this next generation, those in their 20s, 30s and early 40s, are taking their places as civic, community and business leaders, bringing fresh ideas, tremendous skills and unlimited enthusiasm to their new roles.

This is a strong generation of new leaders who want their voices heard and who are anxious to implement their ideas. With their energy and innovative ideas, they will carry on the progress we have made in health care, education and public safety, and in making New Mexico a better place to raise a family and do business.

This new generation's strength and power is bolstered by technological advances that many of us have sometimes struggled to adopt, but that were integral to their lives as they grew up. Voice mail and faxes have given way to email, text messaging and instant messaging. This new generation of leaders use PDAs to work from the road or home as is they were in the office. The lines between news, hard data and gossip are blurred and all of it is available instantly and constantly to this new generation armed with the latest electronic device.

The resulting decentralization of power and the increasingly speed with which decisions are made may be disconcerting to some people, but it is a trend that most likely should not be stopped. The transition from the industrial age to the information age to the technology age appears to be virtually complete. It is an era in which seemingly everyone wants everything "now", a reality that places huge demands on the next generation of leadership as its leaders work to find better, more efficient and effective ways to produce products, deliver information, analyze data and deliver all those items to consumers.

Our role as legislative and community leaders should be to help this next generation understand and appreciate the value of the lessons learned by those who have gone before them. Difficult problems are not solved easily and quickly. There is much to be gained from thoughtful, cautious deliberation. Personal discussion, including empathetic listening, fosters the development and refinement over time of good solutions.

This next generation carries a big responsibility on its shoulders. In our increasingly demanding society; the health, educational, economic and social shifts from rural to urban development must be balanced.

The next generation of appointed, elected and self-made business leaders have high expectations of themselves and the community and state in which they have chosen to live, raise their families and work. In turn, those they work with and for have high expectations of them. This is a promising group of leaders and the members of it will learn that positions of responsibility and authority are not assumed by those in those positions, but are conferred by others.

Senator Pete Campos is a 16 year veteran of the New Mexico State Senate and is currently a member of the Senate Finance and Legislative Finance Committees. He has also been a member of the State Student Council Executive Committee that has guided the extensive preparation of the next generation of leaders.