

Can Dallago beat Lee, Greene, and O'Hara in District 3?

Written by By Bernie Dotson Sun Correspondent
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Former commissioner says he'd resign from RMCH board if re-elected

Beating someone with a proven track record – not to mention an established company owner and former two-term McKinley County commissioner – stacks up as a formidable task. That's the reality in the race for the District 3 seat on the McKinley County Board of Commissioners.

"I would say that I am the proven candidate," David Dallago said. "I served two terms. I own a company that employs 90 people. I am born and raised in Gallup and have dedicated myself to the county."

Dallago owns and operates the Gallup-based Dallago Corporation, an engineering and contracting firm. He previously served the Board of Commissioners from 2005 to 2012. He had to step down for a term as per county rules. Dallago served as commission chairman for the last six years of the term.

Dallago, who graduated from the US Air Force Academy and from graduate school at the University of South Dakota, said if re-elected, he'd like to quickly establish working relationships with the Navajo Nation, the Pueblo of Zuni and San Juan County.

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"I think it's important that we have good agreements and relationships with everybody," Dallago said. "I think the relationships with the area governing bodies are important."

A builder of the Na' Nizhoozhi Center, Inc., the city detox center, Dallago said he's for the continuation of NCI, saying there has to be consensus on funding the facility. The detox center has recently been in dire straits due to a lack of consistent and collective funding. The proper maintenance of county roads is important, too, Dallago said.

"Maintaining roads and infrastructure are characteristic to being a county commissioner," Dallago said. "And I can't stress that having a consensus on the issues is equally important."

As the chairman of the board of directors at the Rehoboth McKinley Christian Hospital, Dallago said the county, which owns the building that houses RMCH, must "keep pushing" for the betterment of RMCH.

"There have been some strides made at RMCH, a lot of strides," he said. "We have to continue moving forward."

Dallago noted that if elected, he'd resign from the RMCH board. "That would be a conflict of interest and I'd resign from the board," he said. "The hospital gets much of its funding from the county and that would be a definite conflict."

During his last term as commissioner, Dallago was the subject of an investigation by former County Manager Richard Kontz, and eventually by the former Office of the State Auditor Hector Balderas, for his company's business dealings with the county through heating and cooling and plumbing maintenance contracts.

While the special audit pointed out alleged procurement violations, an investigation headed by former Gallup attorney David Peterson on behalf of former New Mexico Attorney General Gary King's office, resulted in no charges being filed against the Dallago Corp. During that time, however, it led the county to tightening up their procurement policies.

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District 3 includes the cities of Gallup and Gamerco. Incumbent Tony Tanner isn't running for the District 3 post again. The primary is June 7 and the general election is Nov. 8.

Also in the District 3 county commission race are former McKinley County Manager Bill Lee, former Gallup Fire Department Chief Johnny Greene and retired Bureau of Indian Affairs administrator Gerald O'Hara. Each of the candidates is a Gallup native, except for O'Hara who is from Pennsylvania.

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