Library Bond Measures Successful throughout New Mexico in 2022 Election

By Joe Sabatini

Library bond issues were successful statewide in the 2022 New Mexico General Election. State General Obligation Bond 2, providing $19,266,000 for public, academic, public school and tribal libraries passed by a margin of 161,818 votes. With 401,235 yes votes and 238,410 no votes, Bond 2 won with 62.69% in favor, 3.6 percentage points lower than attained by library bond issue B in 2020. Mora, Harding and Grants were the only Counties which had a higher approval rate this year compared to 2020. The largest declines in support were in Lea, Curry, Chaves, Roosevelt, Eddy, Otero and Valencia Counties. Seven counties, Catron, Chavez, Curry, DeBaca, Lea, Quay and Union, rejected the measure. Taos was once again the banner county for support at 77.6% yes, followed by Santa Fe at 74.4% and McKinley at 74.3%.

Bond 2 showed the second highest level of support among the three state bond issues; the $24.47 million senior citizen facilities Bond 1 received 66.3% approval. Bond 3 provided $215.99 million for higher education, special schools and tribal schools, and received a 61.3% yes vote. These are unofficial complete totals, which will be updated when the State Canvassing Board meets later this month.

In Bernalillo County, library bonds providing $1.5 million to the Public Library Albuquerque and Bernalillo County passed by a vote of 150,329 yes to 69,236 no, a 68.5% margin. This margin is 2% less than the 2021 City of Albuquerque library bond margin of 70.6% and below the 69.2% margin for the 2020 County library bond. Voters in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County have now passed sixty-seven consecutive library funding questions dating back to 1892, with an average margin of 69.0% favorable, and totaling $159.7 million in funding. The Bernalillo County library bond was sixth in voter support among the seven bond issues proposed to county voters in 2022. Funds will go for materials and resources

In Sandoval County, voters passed Bond Question 1 providing $1,885,000 to 15 public and tribal libraries by a vote of 37,505 in favor and 18,910 against, for an approval rate of 66.5%. The margin of victory increased by 2.5% from the 2020 Sandoval County Library Bond Issue, which had passed by a 62% margin. These funds can be used for “planning, designing, upgrading, constructing, remodeling, furnishing, equipping, repairing and otherwise improving library facilities…and purchasing books and other library resources….”

In Doña Ana County, the City of Sunland Park passed a $4 million bond issue for a recreation center and library. The vote was 1,050 in favor and 439 against, a 71% victory margin.

The library community was mobilized to support Bond 2 through the activities of the Bonds for Libraries Special Interest Group (SIG). Under the chairmanship of Omar Durant and with the assistance of NMLA webmaster Robyn Gleasner, the SIG promoted the legislation and prepared campaign materials. We mailed a letter to every academic, public and tribal library director and every high school librarian about the bond campaign and promoting NMLA membership. The SIG website provided local library supporters with a variety of media to promote passage of Bond 2. A display ad was also placed on the state’s leading political blog, “New Mexico Politics with Joe Monahan.” Bond 2 was endorsed by the Albuquerque Journal and other newspapers around the state. We were interviewed for news stories on Albuquerque TV station KRQE and Public Radio station KUNM-FM.

