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Flagstaff, Ariz. 86002

To the Editor:

In regard to the Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission's Aug. 1 public hearing in Flagstaff ("Remap panel a no-show," Aug. 2), I want to apologize to the people of northern Arizona for the scheduling snafu that resulted in none of the five commissioners being in the room.

We goofed – plain and simple. As executive director, I accept responsibility. If it's any consolation, I was the person on site who had to deal with the mix-up. Thanks to our indefatigable chief technology officer, Buck Forst, we were able to bring in Vice Chairman José M. Herrera to preside via Skype. We'll save jokes about his giant, disembodied head for another day.

I can assure participants and local officials that testimony was documented and will receive the same weight as that collected in person by commissioners. In fact, several commissioners were watching the webcast from the start. The citizens and local officials who spoke offered some thoughtful ideas and opinions.

Obviously, this was not what we had planned. AIRC staff, a mapping consultant, a stenographer and interpreters were in place in Flagstaff; other staff members were at remote locations in Page and Tuba City. But, ultimately, the hearing achieved its purpose, even though it wasn't pretty.

We're sorry, and hope to make amends. There will be a second round of public hearings in September once the initial congressional and legislative maps have been drawn. We haven't determined the dates and locations yet, but I guarantee that Flagstaff will be one of the sites. In the meantime, I hope that you will continue to follow the independent redistricting process at [azredistricting.org](http://azredistricting.org).

Sincerely,

Raymond F. Bladine,  
Executive Director