



La Palabra

The newsletter of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico

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The League of Women Voters of New Mexico, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy

Lobbying Workshop - LWVNM 2010

Saturday, December 4, 2010, 10 a.m. - Noon
Montezuma Lodge - 431 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe
(Between Old Taos Highway and Washington St.)

In preparation for the 2011 60-day legislative session, the League of Women Voters of New Mexico is offering a workshop about lobbying at the Round House. This workshop is free and open both to members of the League and to the general public:

Participants in this workshop will learn how to be more effective in advocating for their interests as individual citizens and as members of civic organizations when interacting with the NM Legislature. Handouts and discussion also will provide information on the legislative process in general, on lobbyist regulation, and on the legislative web site tools.

Pre-registration is not required, but the organizers ask that you arrive before 10 a.m. in order to sign in and collect handouts. Presentations will start promptly at 10 a.m. Speakers are as follows:

Senator Peter Wirth was elected to the NM House of Representatives in 2004, re-elected in 2006, and since 2008 has represented Senate District 25 in Santa Fe. He is vice chair of the Senate Rules Committee, a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and co-chairs the interim Courts, Corrections and Justice Committee. He is a partner and mediator with a Santa Fe law firm.

Representative Jimmie Hall has served in the NM House of Representatives since 2004, representing House District 28 in Bernalillo County. He is a member of the House Education Committee, the House Appropriations and Finance Committee, and the permanent Legislative Education Study Committee. He has worked in the agricultural credit business, and since 1999 he has been the executive director of the New Mexico 4-H Youth Development Foundation.

Erin Muffoletto, business director of Ambitions Consulting Group, served as a legislative staffer for former State Representative Eric Youngberg and has assisted other state lobbyists in support roles. She advocated against unfavorable changes to the New Mexico Lottery scholarship program and acquired \$260,000 in capital outlay funds for lighting on UNM's Johnson Field. She is very involved in her community and volunteers with the League of Women Voters of New Mexico among many other organizations.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LWVNM has been in high gear for the coming elections for some months now as we have compiled our *Voters Guides* at the state and local levels. By the time you read this, they will all be out. The statewide portion, covering statewide (i.e., non-districted) offices, proposed amendments to the NM Constitution, and state general obligation bonds, is available at www.lwvnm.org/VGuide2010/. There will be links to the local League *Voters' Guides* as they become available electronically.

I already received, before the end of September, a nice note from Michael Cook of the Las Cruces Public School District, who wrote:

"I found the League of Women Voters of New Mexico's excellent website on 2010 Capital Projects General Obligation Bond Issues. I think even I understand it now!"

and he plans to make use of the information on the Las Cruces Public Schools web site. Great job everyone!

LWVNM plans to advertise the availability of this on-line guide widely, outside the areas of the state covered by the local Leagues. We are placing


display ads in several newspapers published in the eastern and western parts of the state, as well as sending out a press release.

Hopefully, you will soon be hearing from us in more ways than just through *La Palabra* and our web site. We are trying to get up to speed with Salsa (a message system that has replaced CapWiz) before the 2011 legislative session, and we are getting a Facebook page started. After swearing I would never, ever, sign up for Facebook, there I am (admittedly with very unfriendly privacy settings. Maybe I'll relax them eventually.) If you are a Facebook user, search for us.

What LWVNM really needs is someone who can devote more attention to identifying publicity opportunities for the League and facilitating follow-through. We have a lot to boast about, but we need help boasting! If you are good at public relations, consider volunteering your services to the state League, even if only for a few months, to get us going.

Kathy Campbell, President

"THE WEB MONKEY" - Cheryl Haaker

LWVNM is expanding its communications tools to create more visibility for the state League. On the LWVNM web page, lwvnm.org, click on the **Facebook link (f)** to view upcoming events posted on "The Wall" blog and become a "friend". 

Voters' Guides Online! The state and links to local *Voters' Guides* are now posted on LWVNM web site (lwvnm.org). Information about federal and state candidates, constitutional amendments, and state bond issues may be viewed as a web page or view/print a convenient PDF document.

Information about state representatives, county officials, judges up for election or retention, and various bond and tax issues appear in local *Voters' Guide*.

**Remember - lwvnm.org
One Stop Shopping for Information**

League Serves Up An Invaluable Guide

In its editorial on September 29th, the *Santa Fe New Mexican* publicized the Santa Fe County League's *Voters' Guide* and the League itself.

Describing the LWVSFC *Voters' Guide* as "an unbeatable one-stop briefing on the election", the editorial recognizes the League and its efforts with the statements excerpted below:

"...painstakingly put together by some of the nonpartisan League's hardest workers, this is another real gem."

"League members ... do the homework on local and state issues, poring over ... public records and sit diligently ..at meetings of the City Council, the County Commission"

Kudos to members of the Santa Fe League

CREATING A NEW MEXICO HEALTH CARE EXCHANGE

Dick Mason, LWVNM Action Co-Chair and Health Action New Mexico Legislative Chair

In the 2011 legislative session, New Mexico has the opportunity to create a New Mexico Health Insurance Exchange (NMHIE) that will provide the people of New Mexico with a clear and concise marketplace in which to purchase quality and affordable health care coverage. New Mexico also has won \$1 million in federal funding to research and plan the establishment and operation of an exchange.

The federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) that was signed on March 23, 2010, called for the creation of state-based Health Insurance Exchanges (HIE). The goal of an HIE is to introduce competition and improve consumer choices. An HIE must identify clear health plan choices for individuals and employees of small businesses that meet the health care needs of the state population and that are affordable for individuals and employers to purchase. The NMHIE will have to have the capacity to evaluate plans for compliance with PPACA insurance reform requirements, rate plans for compliance with quality and costs, facilitate enrollment into plans (both public and private), and ensure user satisfaction with each plan that is posted.

A key feature of HIEs is that they will shift our private insurance-based health coverage system away from “risk avoidance” in the direction of enhancing competitive pricing and choice based on price and quality. There are many ways for an HIE to do this. For example, the Massachusetts Connector—an HIE that was instituted in 2007—assesses a fee on all participating insurance companies to create an “aggregate risk sharing program”. The staff of the HIE reviews the enrollee costs of each of the insurers, and those that have enrollees who have

incurred greater expenses receive payment out of a common fund. In addition, there is a stop-loss pool that kicks in when any enrollee’s costs exceed \$150,000. Both of these mechanisms reduce the incentive for health insurance companies to “cherry pick” healthy people.

Health Action New Mexico (HANM) believes that three basic principles should govern the design of the New Mexico Health Insurance Exchange:

1. The NMHIE should be an "adjunct agency" (quasi-governmental) so as to maintain independence;
2. There should be strong conflict of interest language in the enabling legislation to bar those with financial interests from the governing board; and
3. It should be a strong purchaser, representing its customers—small businesses and individual policy holders.

The \$1 million in federal funding, announced on September 30, will be used in part to evaluate options available to the state, including the possibility of participating in a regional exchange that could include other states. It will fund research and analysis to follow up directions and inquiries from the Legislature and the Governor and will include a financial modeling tool to analyze the options and planning for the coordination of existing programs such as Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program with the HIE.

You can keep up to date with what is going on with the implementation of health care reform in New Mexico by visiting the following site and clicking on the four sections: <http://www.hsd.state.nm.us/nhcr/nhclao.htm>.

LWVNM BOARD MEETING Highlights - Jennice Fishburn, Secretary

At its September 25, 2010, meeting in Albuquerque, the LWVNM Board:

- Approved revision of a section of “Financial Policies and Procedures for LWVNM” that enables the President to spend up to \$250 without prior approval of the board, thus addressing the inability to handle budget expenditures arising between board meetings.
- Adopted the revised document, “On Becoming a Local League in New Mexico,” that will be used

(Continued on page 7)

GOVERNMENT RESTRUCTURING TASK FORCE

Jody Larson and Kathy Campbell, Observers

At its fifth and sixth meetings, in August and September, the interim Government Restructuring Task Force (GRTF) continued to make progress toward their goal of identifying the most effective ways to deliver those services it believes are essential with the funds available.

In August, the GRTF continued hearing presentations on consolidation options within and among various government agencies and courts. They also heard some suggestions for improving the workings of the Legislature itself, in a review of a Legislative Structure and Process Study Task Force report from 2007.

The September meeting started with a couple of presentations on health and human services issues with charts attempting to illustrate the current rat's nest of interacting and overlapping programs, responsibilities and funding. Almost all of the rest of this two-day session was devoted to discussion, some of which was quite blunt. At one point, Chair Senator Eichenberg asked Legislative Finance Committee (LFC) staff director David Abbey directly if the task force was on the right track. Abbey responded that reorganizing agencies saves very little, if any, money, although he noted that centralizing functions can save some. The facilitator tried to make a distinction between effectiveness (doing the right things) and efficiency (doing things--not necessary the right things--right.) Senator Smith and others said that just about every program and agency has its vocal constituency, which makes doing anything unlikely.

The second day of the September meeting was devoted to public education and, with prodding from the facilitator, a few concrete suggestions for straw man bills emerged by the end of the afternoon. In both August and September there was quite a bit of discussion about linking teacher evaluation to student growth (this recommendation received the most votes in an August exercise, where each member was given five dots to distribute as s/he wished among 33 items), and a straw man bill for this was requested.

Detailed minutes of each meeting are published after approval by the following meeting on the GRTF web site (from www.nmlegis.gov, select Committees => Interim on the left-hand navigation bar and then click on Government Restructuring Task Force.) Most handouts are also posted there.

Editor's Note: This 17-member Task Force was convened when NM House Bill 237 was passed. Its charge is to study the resources of the state agencies' programs, services, funding, policies, and the public need served by them. Findings and recommendations must be made to the Governor and Legislature by December 1, 2010.

EIB HEARING ON CAP-AND-TRADE PROPOSAL - Lora Lucero, Reporting

On September 20, the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board (EIB) held several days of hearings and received public comments on a proposal to cap carbon emissions in New Mexico. The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has proposed a cap-and-trade program for New Mexico, in line with its participation in the Western Climate Initiative (WCI), which has committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 15% below 2005 levels by 2020. Much of the testimony and public comment heard by the Board came from opponents of the proposal, but the League of Women Voters of New Mexico joined other civic and environmental groups in support. Here is the testimony delivered by LWVNM Natural Resources Director Lora Lucero in support of NMED's Cap and Trade petition on the first day of the hearings.

Good evening. My name is Lora Lucero. I am the Natural Resources Director for the League of Women Voters of New Mexico. The League supports this petition.

I don't want to repeat the testimony and facts that support this petition. Saying the same thing many times over doesn't make it any clearer or more urgent.

The League of Women Voters commends the EIB for all of the hearings you've held around the state on both petitions. As the fact-finder, you

must sift through all of the evidence and testimony and determine what's in the best interest of New Mexicans—both those here today and those yet to be born.

As a grandmother, my focus is on the world my granddaughter will inherit when she becomes an adult. I'm truly alarmed and believe there is a very good chance that her world will be much more difficult because my generation was too slow to act in the face of irrefutable evidence about global warming.

In an ideal world, Congress would act and set a cap on carbon. We know this is not an ideal world.

In the absence of leadership from Congress, we might expect the Administration to act boldly and everyone jump on board. However, last week we learned that industry groups are asking the courts to stay implementation of the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) carbon regulations set to go into effect in January 2011.

The states must act. NMED's petition ensures that New Mexico will not act alone, but consistent with a regional approach.

The bottom line --- and the question I hope you ask yourselves when you weigh the pros and cons of establishing a cap-and-trade program is—can New Mexico afford to wait and not act to cut carbon emissions? The League believes time has run out. Any delay in establishing a cap on carbon is irresponsible. We urge you to approve NMED's petition. Thank you."

OUTSTANDING NATURAL RESOURCES WATERS (ONRW)

Barbara Calef, Reporting

During the week of September 14, the Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) held a hearing to consider approving the petition from the New Mexico Departments of the Environment; Game and Fish; and Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources to designate as Outstanding Natural Resource Waters (ONRW) 700 miles of rivers and streams, 29 lakes, and approximately 5,400 acres of wetlands.

The original petition in 2008 called for the WQCC

to give the ONRW designation to the waters in all inventoried roadless areas of the state. Following vociferous opposition from cattlemen, who feared a restriction of grazing rights, the 2009 Legislature passed HJM 49, asking Governor Richardson to suspend the petition process.

The Governor did not retract the petition. However, in response to "stakeholder input", the agencies agreed to narrow the proposal to surface waters within federal wilderness areas, to specify that existing uses in wilderness are protected, and to exclude intermittent waters and tributaries from the list of nominated waters.

LWVNM submitted written comments to the WQCC last winter when the hearing was scheduled for March. I read the following statement during the public comment period on September 14.

*This year, following three years of study, the League of Women Voters of New Mexico adopted a new position on water that states in part, "**The state, water regions, and local government must... minimize water contamination in order to promote the health and safety of all life. They must also preserve and restore rivers and watersheds.**" We believe that the ONRW designation is an excellent tool for achieving those goals.*

Surface water in New Mexico has always been crucial for agriculture, recreation, and the ecological health of our rivers. Now, with a growing population and the severe depletion of many of the state's aquifers, surface water also is being developed as the major source for domestic water supplies. Protecting that water from contamination has become more important than ever.

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico encourages the Water Quality Control Commission to approve the designation of the waters within the U.S. Forest Service wilderness areas as Outstanding Natural Resource Waters. Furthermore, we would support extending the ONRW designation to all the waters within the state's roadless areas.

The WQCC is expected to reach a decision in November.

LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENTS

Central New Mexico - Jan and Olin Bray

As the election gets nearer, LWVCNM is doing more voter education and voter services. Jan Bray testified at the Albuquerque City Council meeting about the continuation of the moratorium on impact fees. She gave the League's position that those who benefit should pay and that public policy should not be based on "mights" and "maybes", but on hard data. The Council voted 7 to 2 to continue the moratorium, but only for six months. Jan was quoted in the *Albuquerque Journal* story on the meeting.

LWVCNM participated in the Volunteer and Resource Fair at the New Mexico Conference on Aging. Thanks to Carolyn Lindberg and Andrea Targhetta for helping to staff the table. We passed out many *Who's Who* brochures and some membership forms.

LWVCNM got a call to participate in the Celebration of Women's Equality Day at Kirtland Air Base. Jan got Mary Wilson for them as their keynote speaker. Jan and Gayle Prinkey also staffed a table at the event with League information, *Who's Who* brochures, membership information and forms, and voter registration forms.

LWVCNM did voter registration at Women's Day at the State Fair on September 22, Intel on September 14, the Corrales Harvest Festival on September 25 and 26, and the Deaf Culture Center Voter Registration Event on October 2.

Greater Las Cruces - Bonnie Burn

Our celebration, Women Win the Vote, recognizing the ratification of the 19 Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that gave women the right to vote, was very successful. We sold 170 tickets for the Saturday half-day session. Free and open to the public, the film, "Iron Jawed Angels," was shown on Friday evening, and the documentary film, "One Women, One Vote," was shown on Saturday afternoon after the half-day session.

The Saturday session featured suffragist flags, banners, and sashes. One of the local florists donated 16 lovely table center pieces made up of

flowers in suffragist colors, gold, white, and purple. Door prize drawings were interspersed with serious panels about women elected to office and engaging the first time voter.

This event was a huge community effort. We were pleased that Jo Tice Bloom suggested the idea and that the League and AAUW could pull together a 17-member Community Organizing Committee. After the event, a debriefing luncheon was held. The group decided to stay together to work on other community events including the 2012 NM Centennial Celebration. We decided to keep the name, Women Win the Vote, and to apply the small amount of left over money to the treasury of the continuing organization.

Our voter services activities have really picked up. Tom Schmugge, Chair, Voter Registration, organized voter registration events at the Farmers' Market, Toucan Market, Conlee Elementary School and Mayfield High School.

Nancy Phillips scheduled two candidates' forums: (1) September 22 for NM State Representatives and NM State Offices, and (2) October 20 for candidates seeking local offices.

Dale Yeo is working on our *Voters' Guide* that is scheduled for publication in the October 15 issue of the weekly newspaper, *Las Cruces Bulletin*.

Erika Graf-Webster, Director, Voter Services, has done an excellent job in organizing the voter services activities and keeping the Board updated.

I continue to serve on NMSU's Immigration Action Task Force Committee, a community group organized by Ambassador Delano Lewis, Director, International Relations Institute, and Professor Neil Harvey of the Center for Latin American and Border Studies. After a successful summer institute, the committee is focusing on federal legislation.

Los Alamos - Barbara Calef

Keven Todd, publisher of our local newspaper, *Los Alamos Monitor*, was the speaker at Lunch with a Leader (LWL) in August. Todd has been in Los Alamos for just one year and said his goal

was to improve the newspaper's coverage and profitability. He was pleased to announce that in the second quarter of 2010, the newspaper made a profit for the first time in a long time.

In September the LWL speaker was Chick Keller, president of the Pajarito Environmental Education Center (PEEC). The board of the LWV recently voted to support PEEC's request that Los Alamos County approve as a Capital Improvement Project the construction or redesign of a building for the nature center. The board based its endorsement on the LWV of Los Alamos position on sustainability.

In preparation for the General Election, Lynn Jones, Becky Shankland, and Barbara Calef completed proofreading of the *2010 Voters' Guide*, that Lynn had assembled. The *Guide* for Los Alamos includes information about local candidates and eleven proposed Charter amendments as well as material about statewide candidates, bonds and amendments. It will be published in the *Los Alamos Monitor* on October 6 and delivered to all households in the county. The League will hold two candidates' forums during the first week in October.

Santa Fe County - Meredith Machen

In recent months, LWVSFC has been extremely active in working on government transparency and accountability as well as voter education. League leaders are serving on both the City and County ethics committees and have been asked to assist with revising ethics ordinances. Several members are closely following Santa Fe County's Strategic Land Development Plan (SLDP) and suggesting revisions to make it clearer, better organized, and more consistent. We have formally expressed our concern about the weakening of the plan in response to pressure from residents in the very rural southern part of the county who largely resist the proposed restrictions. League members will continue to speak out on the plan as it is being reviewed by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) and will advocate for a fair, enforceable code.

Stewardship of our natural resources is a primary focus of several unit and general meetings.

LWVSFC also has spoken out about transparency

issues at the county. It is working with attorneys with the NM Foundation for Open Government to see if that organization will investigate the legitimacy of the BOCC's executive session on a land use issue which was an exception to the NM Open Meetings Act.

In voter education, LWVSFC held two very successful forums. One was with candidates for U.S. Representative, Congressional District 3; the second was with candidates for state representatives for the four district races in Santa Fe County. These forums were co-sponsored with Santa Fe branches of AAUW and NAACP. Efforts to schedule a gubernatorial candidate forum have been unsuccessful. The 33,000 copies of the *Voters' Guide* for Santa Fe County have been distributed in the hopes of increasing turnout. Voter registration and community engagement efforts continue.

LWVSFC's History Project Committee held a "recollections" meeting to share some accomplishments, challenges, and memories of the past 60 year.

Voting is a right best exercised by people who have taken time to learn about the issues.
Tony Snow, American Journalist

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS *(Continued from page 3)*

- when local member-at-large initiate the process to become recognized local Leagues.
- Voted to place LWVNM *Voters' Guide* advertising in a limited number of newspapers in outlying areas not served by local Leagues.
- Decided to change the LWVNM Topics format so the reply default is "reply to sender."

In addition, the Board was updated on the progress of two concurrence proposals, transparency in state government and updating of the Natural Resources position. LWVNM Strategic Plan goals were reviewed in light of using newer technology such as Facebook, an account soon to be set up by Cheryl Haaker, Twitter, and LWVUS' "Salsa" communication tools. Members heard about plans for LWVNM activities on "10-10-10" that will focus attention on the seriousness of climate change.

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CALENDAR

2010

- November 13** Board Meeting, Socorro
12:30 - 5:30 p.m., Skeen Library
New Mexico Tech
- December 4** Lobbying Workshop
10:00 a.m. to Noon, Montezuma Lodge
431 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe
(Between the Old Taos Highway and
Washington Street)

2010

- January 8** LWVNM Board Meeting,
10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Albuquerque
Manzano Mutigenerational Center
- February 1** League Day at the Legislature
Speakers and Lunch at the
First Christian Church
645 Webber Street, Santa Fe
(two blocks from the Round House
with parking)
- March 19** LWVNM Board Meeting, Socorro
12:30-5:30 p.m., Skeen Library
New Mexico Tech
- May 14-15** LWVNM Convention
Holiday Inn Express, Los Alamos