

The VOTER

League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org
June 2013



RESPECTable Lobbying

Allison Smith, Government Relations, Kuper, Smith & Associates LLC
Monday, June 10, 2013, 11:30 a.m., Good Samaritan Social Center
Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle



Darth Vader is the figure that often comes to mind when you mention the word *Lobbyist*. Lobbyists and special interest groups are often regarded negatively when attempting to influence government. The dark side is what people think. Special interest groups are spending tons of money to influence government officials...and in some cases that is true...but it doesn't have to be that way.

Ms. Smith will be addressing the topic of lobbying state government with the aim of getting the message across in a responsible, positive and truthful manner. She will discuss lobbying state government in a favorable way that gets results and preserves the reputation of the lobbyist and/or group influencing state government.

The NM legislature is a familiar to her because she began her career there in 1994. She began as a secretary for the then Senate Ways and Means Committee Chairman. She later became an analyst for a lobbying firm, and then for the majority leaderships in the Senate and House, respectively. In 2006 she opened her own government relations business.

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CALENDAR

June 3 (Monday) - Deadline for Reservations for Lunch with a Leader. RSVP Roberta Gran, Email: robertagran@q.com, Tel: 373-8490

June 6 (Thursday) - 2:30-4:30 p.m., Board Meeting, Las Cruces City Hall, Room 2007A. All are welcome!

June 10 (Monday) - 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Lunch with a Leader, Respectable Lobbying, Allison Smith, Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle. \$10. **Reservations Required.** If you don't cancel your reservation, you will be charged for lunch.

June 13 (Thursday) - Noon - 1:00 p.m. - Quality of Life/Wellbeing in Doña Ana County Study Committee, Joy Goldbaum's Office, 741 N. Alameda, Ste #6, Tel: 527-8620. Directions: From W. Picacho Ave., turn Left onto N. Alameda, and turn Right at the Restaurant, Bite of Belgium, on Van Patten. 741 will be on the left side of Van Patten.

June 20 (Thursday) - 2-4 p.m., Third Thursday Book Club, Selection: *The Real Story of Risk* by Glenn Croston, at the home of Dale Yeo, (575) 405-7530.

Notable Dates: June 14 - Flag Day June 16 - Father's Day

JULY - LEAGUE ON VACATION No Lunch with a Leader or Board meetings

The VOTER

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The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces

P.O. Box 8322
Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org

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Roberta Gran

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Co-Director, Voter Services
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Christina Little-373-1882

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Web Master
Dale Yeo - 405-7580

Newsletter Editor
Bonnie Burn - 526-0013
burnb@comcast.net

Board Highlights - May 2, 2013 - Christina Little, Secretary

At the May 2013 board meeting, the protocols and procedures for the new board were established. The following decisions were made:

LWVGLC will set up a separate bank account for any funds designated to the Education Fund.

Calendar of League year 2013-2014:

- Lunch with Leader Meetings: June, August, September, October, January, March, and May.
The schedule of luncheon meetings avoids conflict with the Academy for Learning in Retirement (ALR).
- Proposed Afternoon Social in November and February.
- Legislative Breakfast is tentatively scheduled for December 7.
- The Annual Meeting will be on April 19, 2014.
- The board will meet on the first Thursday of each month from 2:00 – 4 pm. There will not be a meeting in July.
- The Las Cruces Municipal Election is scheduled for November 5, so the League will be busy with Voters Service activities in October.

In addition, Bonnie Burn, coordinator, LWVNM 2013 Convention, gave a progress report. Kudos to her and all the GLC committee members for their diligent work and thoughtful preparation.

Lunch with a Leader - June 10, 2013 *(Continued from page 1)*

She was educated at the Swiss Hotel Association School, Les Roches (1991) and then completed her master of science degree at New Mexico State University in hospitality and tourism.

Ms. Smith currently serves as board chair of the NM Association of Commerce and Industry; is a member of the advisory council for the Roadrunner Food Bank of Southern, NM, and New Mexico Amigos; and chairs the Public Relations committee of Rotary club.

We invite you to join us for lunch and gain another perspective about lobbying

Membership Dues - June 30 Deadline

Individual - \$60 - 2nd Household \$30
LWV of Greater Las Cruces,
P.O. Box 8322, Las Cruces, NM 88006



President's Message

The new Board of Directors held its first meeting on May 2. This was an organizational meeting during which we discussed our roles and responsibilities and laid out an initial calendar for this League year. One of things we decided is that we are taking July off – **there will be no Board meeting or Lunch**

with a Leader in July.

Our luncheon on May 13 was highly successful! We had great attendance—well over 40 people showed up, including several guests who expressed an interest in joining the League. Senator Joseph Cervantes, who is always very informative and entertaining, talked about this year's legislative session. See Look Back, p. 4.

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico convention was held here in Las Cruces on May 18 and 19. Our Las Cruces League had an allocation of four delegates, who were Christina Little, Gwen Hanson, Mickey Curtis, and I. A summary of the business that was conducted during the meeting is presented on p. 7.

I had never been to a League Convention, so it was a completely new and interesting experience for me. What came through loud and clear is that the state League is truly committed to, and spends a great deal of time and effort in, advocating with legislators in Santa Fe. This involvement is based on in-depth analysis and understanding of proposed legislation and the workings of the various committees, as well as good working relationships between League members and legislators. What also became clear is that my fellow delegates were a group of very smart people! It is truly a privilege to be a part of this group. As the GLC League president, I am a member of the state Board of Directors. I also was named to the state Budget Committee, and volunteered to be on the committee to review and revise the state League By-Laws—so it looks like trips up north are in my future.

Plans are underway to participate in an event to support Women Veterans. The League will join the American Women Veterans Stand Down on July 21 at American Legion Post 10. The League will staff a table and conduct voter registrations. Roberta Gran has organized a staffing schedule. Please contact her if you are willing to take a two-hour shift, sometime between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.. Tel: 373-8490 and email: robertagran@q.com.

We received the sad news that Tom Tate, a great supporter of the League in the past, passed away on April 28. Our hearts go out to his widow, Donna, who has served in several leadership positions in the League over the years.

Erika Graf-Webster



New Member

Ardyth A. Norem
2800 Chante Court
Las Cruces, NM 88011
Tel: (575) 522-0780
Email: ardythnorem@icould.com

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY



Email any changes to
your contact

information to: Bonnie Burn,
burnb@comcast.net

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Thank You

Community Learns About ALEC

Roberta Gran, Reporting

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) has been in the news recently because of its influence on state legislators. ALEC is a 501(c)3 organization composed of legislators, businesses and foundations that produces draft model legislation that is often introduced and passed by state legislatures. Sometimes described as a collaboration between state legislators and corporate members seeking to enact legislation focused on conservative public policy, it also has been described as presenting industry-backed legislation as grass-roots work.

The United States of ALEC, produced by Bill Moyers, first raised awareness about this organization. The program is now available in DVD format for showing in venues around the country. New Mexico Common Cause and the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces presented two public education opportunities to continue to raise awareness about ALEC.

Great Conversation hosted the first showing of the Moyers' program on Friday, April 26, 6:00 p.m., at the Community Enterprise Center in the Main Street Mall. Viki Harrison, Executive Director of NM Common Cause, engaged the audience in a lively discussion about the organization, developing bills, the influence of outside organizations on the legislative process and efforts to combat that kind of influence.

The second showing took place on Saturday, April 27, 3:30 p.m., at the Fountain Theatre in Old Mesilla.

Over 50 community members attended the presentations, and the organizers felt that the events achieved their goal and developed interest not only in the efforts of ALEC but also in the nonpartisan work of NM Common Cause and the League.

Look Back - The \$200 Million Legislative Session

Bonnie Burn, Reporting

As is traditional at the end of the NM legislative session, the League invites to its May Lunch with a Leader meeting a legislator who provides a summary of events that occurred during the session. This year, Joseph Cervantes, first-term NM Senator, was the invited speaker. He is not new to the legislature. Having served 12 years as a member of NM House of Representatives, he provided, from the other chamber of the Roundhouse, some insights about the bills that were introduced, passed, and vetoed.



The 60-day session was, indeed, different. The legislation was affected by a divided government, Governor Susana Martinez being a Republican and the majority in the legislature Democratic. More money was spent on the 2012 state election than in past years. The Governor's Political Action Committee (PAC) spent over \$2 million in an effort to unseat leaders in the Democratic Party. Tim Jennings from Roswell, House Speaker, was not re-elected after serving in the House since 1979, but Senator Michael Sanchez, Senate Majority Floor Leader, was re-elected. The 2010 Census caused the boundaries of the legislative districts to be changed and resulted in 33% of the legislators being elected for the first time. This, of course, affects assignment to committees that are based on seniority. Representative Mary Helen Garcia remained the most senior among the Doña Ana County delegation and was chair of the Voters and Election Committee. Representatives Nate Cote and Jeff Steinborn were considered freshman, having returned to the legislature after losing the 2010 election. Senator Cervantes must have received credit for his years in the House because he was appointed vice-chair of the Judiciary Committee. He also will serve as chair of the Interim Drought

(Continued on page 8)

NMSU Symposium on the Affordable Care Act - Erika Graf-Webster, Reporting

On May 1, NMSU held a symposium entitled “Understanding the Affordable Care Act” (ACA). The symposium was termed the “First Annual Dean’s Healthcare Symposium”, and was under the overall direction of Tilajun Adera, PhD, Dean of the College of Health and Social Services. Dean Adera pointed out in his introduction that this was the first of additional annual symposia to come, because the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is so complex that it will take years to fully understand all of its provisions and their implications on the health care system of the U.S..

Dean Adera started by citing some startling statistics, based on recent surveys, including one done in March of 2013:

- 42% of the U.S. population is unaware that the law exists
- 12% would like it repealed
- 7% think it was overturned by the Supreme Court
- 50% say they do not have enough information on how it affects them (the percentage was actually higher among those that it affected most, namely the poor)
- 40% have a generally unfavorable impression of the law
- 37% have a favorable impression of the law

Given these numbers, there is clearly not enough information, especially correct information, about the law. Hence, the College of Health and Social Services will hold annual symposia about the law until the knowledge gap is greatly reduced. The objective of this symposium was to present facts about the law, not opinion. The presenters are listed at the bottom of this report. The following are the major points made during the symposium:

Health care legislation came about in fits and starts. Some activity was started during the Great Depression, but it was not until 1965 that Medicare and Medicaid were implemented. During the 1980s there were efforts to modernize Medicare. After a great deal of political wrangling, the ACA was finally signed into law in 2010, and was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2012.

The ACA is very complex. It has three major goals: to reform health insurance, to create better health outcomes, and to reduce the cost of health care. However, the path to getting the law implemented was rocky – the American Medical Association lobbied against it! Here are some cost factors/issues that drove the move toward the ACA:

- Health care costs are a big deal – currently, Medicare is 15% of the total federal budget.
- From the GDP perspective, the cost of health care in the U.S. is 2.5 times that of all the money spent on or by the military/industrial complex.
- From year to year, the increase in health insurance premiums greatly outpaces the increases in wages.
- Looking at cost of health care vs. the longevity achieved, the U.S. costs are 2 to 3 times those of other countries. No other country has even come close to the U.S. costs.
- 62% of all bankruptcies are due to medical costs.

The ACA will have a large impact on New Mexico. Currently, 21% (over 400,000 people) of New Mexico’s population is uninsured. There are about 550,000 individuals covered by New Mexico Medicaid. These are mostly children and some low-income (less than \$4,500) parents

(Continued on page 6)

and single persons. The ACA will extend Medicaid coverage to individuals with incomes up to \$32,000—(i.e., 160,000 additional people). Among the new provisions of the Medicaid program are the coverage of costs of home care so that people do not have to go into nursing homes, and provisions for behavioral and mental health coverage (currently sorely lacking in New Mexico).

Generally, ACA coverage will come through employers. For those individuals who don't get health insurance through their work, coverage can be obtained through Insurance Exchanges. The Insurance Exchanges will offer four basic plans with varying fees based on the amount of medical costs covered: Bronze covers 60% of medical costs; Silver covers 70-80%; Gold covers 80-90%; and Platinum covers 90+%.

The Insurance Exchanges will be operational by October 1, 2013. There will be penalties, low in the first couple of years, but rising significantly after that, for individuals who do not purchase health insurance.

One of the options to be offered by the Insurance Exchange in New Mexico is a co-op program, "New Mexico Health Connections." It is non-profit, member-owned, and 50% of its Board of Directors will consist of its participants (i.e., the insured). Its goal is to maximize enrollment and provide innovative models of health care. An example of the latter is "team-based" medical care, where primary care doctors and specialty doctors are physically in the same building, share medical records and can offer complete medical care to the patients. The co-op program will embody one of the objectives of the ACA, moving from a "fee-for-service" model to a "fee-for-outcome" model of health care.

The terms integrated care and coordinated care occur throughout the language of the ACA. There will be a strong push to eliminate unnecessary tests and surgeries that have been shown to actually DECREASE health.

There will be coordination of information and health care between Medicaid and Medicare.

It is important to point out that, for those of us already on Medicare, the ACA will have little effect except for closing the prescription "donut hole."

The ACA will provide health insurance to approximately 30 million additional people in the U.S. People with health insurance tend to seek health care; therefore, the experts foresee a great shortage of providers—both doctors and nurses. In New Mexico, the shortage, especially of primary care providers, is already large, and will get worse. One answer is to expand the availability of nurse practitioners. Studies show that the health outcomes whether treated by a primary care doctor or a nurse practitioner are about the same. NMSU is committed to expanding its program for nurse practitioners. This involves training to the MS or PhD level. (Unfortunately, the NMSU department currently lacks sufficient faculty, a situation that will need to be overcome.) The vision is that nurse practitioners will be full partners with doctors, but will cost less.

From an economics perspective, the ACA has the potential to greatly benefit New Mexico's economy. Right now, 20% of all the jobs in the state are related to health care. Health care drives job growth and is fairly recession-proof. It is expected that health care jobs will grow by about 30% due to the ACA. Health care gets the most federal dollars of any industry. Good health care matters in attracting businesses and increasing the productivity of the work force.

(Continued on page 7)

Affordable Health Care *(Continued from page 6)*

In fact, some of the strongest proponents of the ACA in New Mexico are farmers and ranchers who feel that if their workers have good health care, they will be stronger and more productive. However, farm and ranch workers will need help in getting the benefits of the ACA. Many are virtually illiterate, and can't deal with the required paperwork.

The ACA may even have a beneficial effect on education. Better health leads to less poverty which leads to better graduation rates which leads to a better educated population.

The symposium organizers stated that there will be a symposium next year. Individuals are invited to participate in the planning. If you are interested in doing so, contact Jennifer Cervantes, Tel: (575) 646-3526.

The presenters were: Joseph S. Gladstone, PhD, MPH; John J. Andazola, MD, FAAFP; Kelly O'Donnell, PhD; Mark Epstein, MD, MBA; William Orr, MD; Gina M. Fullbright, DNP, RN, WHCNP-BC; Michael G. Ellis, PhD; and Comfort Ricketts, PhD. Donna Wagner, PhD, moderated the panel discussion at the end of the symposium.



Leaguers Descend on Las Cruces



Over 40 delegates, observers, and spouses attended the 2013 Convention of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico May 18-19, 2013. The Greater Las Cruces League hosted this biennial event.

The convention opened with a reception on Friday evening, May 17, at Carol Jackson's home where delegates from NM's four local Leagues—Central New Mexico, Los Alamos, Santa Fe County, and Greater Las Cruces—became acquainted. The food and camaraderie set a convivial tone for the convention.

Over the next two days, delegates conducted the business of the convention.

Annual operating budgets of \$7,514 for 2013-2014 and \$7,172 for 2014-2015 were adopted. Per member payment (PMP) was raised by \$1 from \$12 to \$13 for individual membership and from \$6 to \$6.50 for 2nd household members, effective 2014-2015.

Officers were elected:

President: Meredith Machen
 Vice President: Dick Mason
 Secretary: Chris Burroughs
 Treasurer: Cheryl Haaker

Bylaw revisions that included the concept of a Leadership Team, updating the criteria for delegate representation at convention, and several other operational issues were approved. (See La Palabra, Spring 2013 for details)

A Program for Study and Action was adopted. In addition to re-adoption of current positions, two positions were adopted by concurrence: (1) Affordable Housing proposed by LWVGLC and (2) LWVGLC's position on Mental Health Services proposed by LWVNM Leadership Team. Proposed wording changes to the Public Regulation Commission and the Apportionment and Redistricting positions were adopted.

Two studies received time extension: (1) Alcohol Study (LWVCNM) - one year extension and (2) Study of Land Use (LWVNM) - a two year study.

A new study, "New Mexico Mental Health Care, chaired by Shelly Shepherd and Jan Bray, also was approved.

There was a lengthy discussion about updating League positions. Susan Wilson, Director, LWVUS and Liaison for LWVNM was present and will be providing guidance in this area.

Look Back *(Continued from page 4)*

Subcommittee and vice-chair of the Interim NM Finance Authority Oversight Committee. Senator Mary Kay Papen (D) was elected Senate President Pro Tem, a position that was last held by a woman 70 years ago. Representative W. Ken Martinez (D) is the new House Speaker.

More bills than ever were introduced in both chambers. The NM Constitution requires that the budget be balanced so a balanced budget was submitted by the legislators to the Governor. The state is in a strong financial position. There are healthy financial reserves and the question arose about dipping into them to support early childhood education, but that proposed legislation was not passed.

Nothing much was accomplished in the area of education. The Governor continues to pursue A-F grading for schools and wants to retain third grade students who are not reading at grade level. Senator Cervantes does not support either of these issues and believes it is the wrong direction for education. No one understands the complex school grading algorithm, and parents are excluded from the decision to retain students. There is no provision to help students now beyond the third grade who are not reading at grade level. He would support adding 20 days to the school year. This would help solve the problems of losing learning during summer months and necessitating spending the first month of the next year in review and catch up. Cost of this change would be \$200 million.

The focus of the Governor this session was on protecting the \$200 million investment in the Spaceport. The Immunity Bill that protects vendors from liability for failure of equipment was passed.

Complaints from the public about the last minute passage of the tax bill that lowers the corporate tax rate from 7.6% to 5.9% have already been mentioned in the press and letters to the editor. Legislators did not have access to the Fiscal Impact Report or to staff briefings in advance of the vote. The majority of small corporations in NM are classified as S Corporations and already have a lower tax rate than large corporations. The largest effect of

the tax bill will be the "hold harmless" funds that will no longer be distributed to the cities and counties when the tax bill takes effect in 2015. This lost revenue could be as much as 10% of local government budgets. The bill gives authority to city and county governments to levy taxes to make up for the deficit in gross receipt tax (GRT) revenue.

Water was the last big issue for discussion. Senator Cervantes will chair the Interim Drought Subcommittee that will hold hearings around the state. In 2012, Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) promised Mesilla Valley farmers ten inches of water but farmers received three. In 2013, EBID may not be releasing any water for farm irrigation. Well water, a diminishing resource, will have to be used. Any water released from EBID will be sent to Texas to honor compact agreements. Texas has brought a case against NM about water. Rio Grande water is treated and used for drinking by residents of El Paso. Drastic measures may be taken during this drought period (e.g. leaving fields fallow, cutting back pecan trees to the extent that there will be no product but the tree may survive). Conservation of water is currently enforced in Las Cruces. There is evidence that other larger communities do a better job; conservation efforts in these areas should be researched and best practices initiated in the city and county.

Senator Cervantes looks to the voters to elect a strong government that will undertake the complicated and difficult task of solving issues. Using a quotation from Seneca, a Roman philosopher:

If a man does not know to what port he is sailing, no wind is favorable.

In his opinion, many complicated issues that need to be resolved are not being addressed. Attracting high tech companies has been the focus of economic growth rather than preserving industries that are already here: agriculture, White Sands Missile Range, NASA, and Los Alamos and Sandia Laboratories. Education and water bills were defeated for "lack of money." Yet, the tax bill will remove \$200 million from state revenue. Senator Cervantes urged people to take bold action by electing individuals who can find the port in Seneca's quotation.



League News



Voter Services

Prepared by Gwen Hanson, Co-Director

The Voter Services Committee met on May 8, 2013, to plan for the Las Cruces Municipal Election. An election calendar follows:

- September 24 - Candidate Filing Deadline
- October 1 - Candidate Certification
- October 7 - Close of Voter Registration
- November 5 - Las Cruces Municipal Election

Seats up for election include: Councilors for Districts 3, 5, and 6 and Municipal Judge, Division II. At this time it is unknown if any referenda will be on the ballot.

Voter Registration has already begun, and will extend through the summer. Bonnie Burn has identified eleven members who are already volunteer voter registrars. The committee discussed potential registration locations, as well as collaborations with other registering groups in Las Cruces.

The 2013 Voters Guide will be published for voter information in early October, prior to the start of early voting. The two local newspapers, *Las Cruces Bulletin* and *Las Cruces Sun-News*, will be given the opportunity to bid on publishing the *Voters Guide*. Due to the small number of candidates for this election, the *Voters Guide* is expected to be as little as two-pages.

Early in October, a **candidates forum** will be held for those who are certified by the City Clerk. The League again appreciates having access to the Council Chambers, City Hall, as the venue for the forum because of its convenience and television broadcasting capability

A sign-up list for additional member volunteers to help with the election was circulated at Lunch with a Leader on May 13, 2013. If you were not at the luncheon but want to help, please contact

Gwen Hanson at 556-9251 or
email: gwenhanson10@gmail.com

Las Cruces Sun-News

Letter to the Editor

*Christina Little & Vicki Simons,
Co-Chairs, Affordable Housing*

One of the many negative effects of the sequester (across-the-board cuts to spending in the federal budget) is the reduction in funding for the Housing Choice Voucher Program (Section 8) from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for housing authorities across the country. HUD has reduced the amount of funds available to pay landlords, as well as fees for administration of the program. Because of this, the Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority (MVPHA) is not able to issue any new vouchers to low income residents of Doña Ana County through the end of the calendar year. Currently, there are approximately 2,300 names on the waiting list for this program.

The Housing Choice Voucher Program was developed by HUD to provide rental subsidies for eligible families (including single persons, elderly, and disabled) residing in newly constructed, rehabilitated, and existing rental and cooperative apartments. This program has proven to be a very effective and efficient use of funds: it aids low-income persons in obtaining safe and affordable housing, in paying a portion of their rent, and in providing funds directly to landlords who rent their properties and receive reliable rental income.

It is projected that the loss of these funds may impact 125,000 to 250,000 low-income voucher holders nationwide. To date, MVPHA does not anticipate terminating existing vouchers due to loss of funds.

As advocates for more sorely needed affordable housing, especially during the current recession, we urge people to contact their congressional representatives to ask that this essential funding be restored now.

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS

The League's Observer Corps can enable greater coverage and information gathering, provide early warning of upcoming issues of concern, increase League's visibility, and assist in networking with other groups. We appreciate the reports that are submitted by Observers. Following the League practice of publishing nonpartisan, objective reports, the information submitted may be edited for content and brevity.

Mesilla Valley Public Housing Authority (MVPHA) - March 19, - April 16, 2003 - Vicki Simons, Observer

Four of five commissioners (Marrujo, Cordero, Olguin-Fisher and Pandak) were present at the March 2013 meeting. Robbie Levey, Executive Director, introduced Mandy Griego, Public Housing Revitalization Specialist from the HUD office in Albuquerque. She came to discuss the effect of sequestration (cuts in federal funding across the board to many programs) on the Housing Choice Voucher Program. This program aids low income residents in obtaining rental housing subsidies and veterans to obtain transitional housing. Ms. Griego is helping the agency to manage the financial disruption of the Housing Choice Voucher Program.

The decrease in federal funding will mean that there will be no new rental vouchers issued until the end of the year 2013. MVPHA hopes to retain funding for the vouchers that have already been issued. When residents move out of the subsidized housing, that voucher will not be issued to a new family; thus decreasing funding needs by attrition. Ms. Griego also said that MVPHA will be better off than other housing authorities in the state because of a variety of functions it serves beyond the public housing voucher program. An additional staff person from the Albuquerque HUD field office, Julian Barela, Financial Analyst, was present to review the finances of the agency with Sharon Hansen, MVPHA accountant. New vouchers to veterans for transitional housing also will also not be issued.

The main topic of discussion at the April 16 Board of Commissioners meeting was the issuance of vouchers to veterans for transitional housing. The Community of Hope

pays for the first 2 years of these rental vouchers, and one of the main locations for housing these veterans is the Oak Street complex, a MVPHA property. The Housing Authority places a two-year limit on this transitional housing for veterans and Nicole Martinez, Director, Community of Hope, would like MVPHA to consider removing the time limit. Community of Hope, along with rental subsidies, also provides many programs to aid veterans in their transition to civilian society. Ms Martinez believes that removing this time period would give the veterans a sense of stability. Neither NM Mortgage Finance Authority nor HUD requires that there be a time period on transitional housing. The Board voted to remove the two-year limit.

South Central Solid Waste Authority (SCSWA) Board Meeting, May 16 2013, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m., Transfer Station Conference Room - Johnnie Aldrich, Observer

"If it bleeds, it leads." That old journalistic precept applies here today.

The almost two-hour monthly meeting of the South Central Solid Waste Authority, usually devoted to analyses of collection tonnages, truck lifetimes, and budgetary matters, was enlivened today by a lengthy discussion of what to do about an unsolved crime.

On April 22, 2013, a SCSWA employee (name withheld here because of privacy issues) was collecting dumping fees and "directing traffic" at the Butterfield Community Collection Center on Las Cruces's East Mesa. A customer entered, deposited his load of tree stumps, and was going to leave the facility without paying the

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS (Continued)

required fee. The gate guard stood in the exit lane to try to block the departure of the driver. The customer proceeded to run over the employee, whose left leg was broken when the truck's trailer ran over it. The gate guard lay alone for over a half hour before he could drag himself back to the gatehouse to call for help.

After several days in an El Paso hospital, the guard is now recovering at home, but the identity of his assailant (and of the female who accompanied him) is still unknown.

Thus, the Board's agenda for today's meeting included a resolution requesting a \$10,000 budget allocation to be used as a reward to anyone giving information about the identity of the alleged assailant. The Board unanimously approved the resolution, after discussion about including the expenses of the search by local Crime Stoppers and police departments as part of the reward sum.

All of the Board members expressed similar sentiments: The public needs to know that behavior of this kind is intolerable; an attack on one employee is an attack on the government itself. SCSWA employees need to know that administration supports their efforts and cares about their welfare, thus the constant emphasis on safety measures at all of the facilities, the rapid response to this particular incident, and the size of the reward. VOTER readers undoubtedly will eventually read more of the details about the event because the Board authorized widespread publication of their attempts to identify the perpetrator.

Other business in today's meeting also involved investigation. Glass recycling is one of the most frequently requested services when constituents have or take an opportunity to suggest ways to improve solid waste collection.

During the past two or three years, individual Board members have sought information on the possibilities and even visited facilities in distant cities. The expense of shipping the glass to recycling facilities always has been a

deterrent to collecting it here.

Today, Board Chairman Silva suggested the formation of a subcommittee, a citizen task force, to focus its efforts on this issue alone, to thoroughly investigate costs, benefits, and available facilities and processes. A possibility is that Doña Ana County could have its own facility. The committee would share the results of its investigation and make recommendations to the Board about implementation (or not). The Board agreed to support such a committee and even discussed possible participants.

Remembering Tom Tate

(1934-2013)

It was with sadness that League members learned Tom Tate died on April 28. A long-time supporter of the League, Tom was a very generous contributor to the League, especially to our *Voters Guide*. Both he and Donna, his wife of 57 years and a former director of Voter Services on the League Board, held the League in special esteem.

Tom was educated at the U.S. Naval Academy (1955), then at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and Stanford University. After a 20 career in the Civil Engineer Corps and further employment in the private sector, he and Donna moved to Las Cruces in 1994.

Tom was a community activist who believed in volunteerism and personal philanthropy. His philosophy was demonstrated by his involvement with the Memorial Medical Center, Las Cruces Symphony, and the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico.

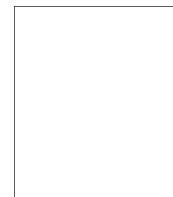
For some of us it will be difficult to be present at community events and not see Tom.

Contributions may be made to the Tom and Donna Tate Endowment at the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico.

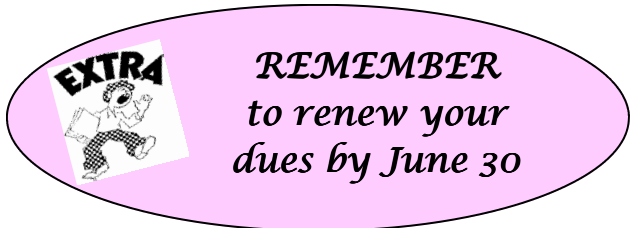


League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces
 P.O. Box 8322
 Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322

(575) 524-VOTE (8683)



FIRST CLASS



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Membership Application



Membership: Individual (\$60), 2nd Household Member (\$30), and Students (\$25)
New Members joining after November 1 pay half-dues.

Name: _____

2nd HoU.S.ehold: _____

Address: _____ **City/State/Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Cell:** _____ **Email:** _____

\$ _____ Contribution to the League Make Check payable to LWV of Greater Las Cruces

\$ _____ Contribution to the Education Fund (Tax Deductible) Make check payable to
 League of Women Voters Education Fund

All checks should be mailed to

League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces, P.O. Box 8322, Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces, 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.