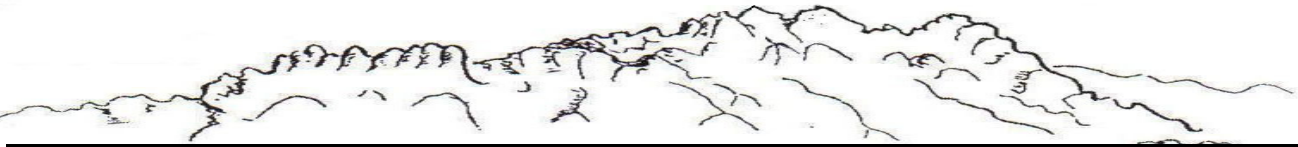


The VOTER

League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
Web Site: www.lwvglc.org
September 2014



Lunch with a Leader

FORWARD in FY 2015

Julia T. Brown, Esq, County Manager, Doña Ana County

Monday, September 8, 2014, 11:30 a.m.

Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle

The Doña Ana County fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. The FY 2015 budget was prepared in recognition of regional and local economies (including revenue projections) and the need to balance the relationship between expenditures and revenues, not by reliance on utilizing county reserves, but with the proper mix of reducing expenditures and enhancing revenues.

After examining the operations of several departments and governmental functions, restructuring has been proposed that will result in the re-centralization of grants functions within the county (except for Doña Ana

(Continued on page 2)

CALENDAR

September 2 (Tuesday) - Deadline for making reservations for Lunch with a Leader

RSVP: Ruth Benjamins, Email: benjpa@q.com, Tel: 527-0204.

September 4 (Thursday) - 1:30—3:30 p.m., Board Meeting, City Hall Conference Room 2007A. All are welcome!

September 8 (Monday) - 11:00 - 11:30 a.m., Study Committee Updates: An effort to inform members about the issues currently under study. Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle.



September 8 (Monday) - 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Lunch with a Leader: Julia T. Brown, County Manager, Doña Ana County, Good Samaritan Social Center, Creative Arts Room, 3011 Buena Vida Circle. \$10. Reservations Required: Ruth Benjamins, Email: benjpa@q.com, Tel: 527-0204. If reservations are not cancelled, you will be charged for lunch.

September 9 (Tuesday) - 6:00 - 7:30 p.m., Candidates Forum, New Mexico Attorney General and Public Regulation Commission, Las Cruces City Hall Chamber, 700 N. Main Street.

September 18 (Thursday) - 2:00 - 4:00 p.m., Third Thursday Book Club, A Fighting Chance by Elizabeth Warren and Stress Test: Reflections on Financial Crises by Timothy F. Geithner. at the home of Marjorie Burr. Please select one book to read and let Marjorie know your choice so that a balanced conversation can be held: 522-2528 or burrmmmb@aol.com

September 19 (Friday) - 1:00 p.m., Water Issues Meeting, - Dr. Philip J. King, NMSU, Understanding the Regional Hydrology. Good Samaritan, Bldg. E, West Lounge, First Floor. Information Contact: Win Jacobs, 521-9331, winjacobs1@gmail.com.

Notable Dates: September 1 - Labor Day; September 17 - U.S. Constitution signed (1787)

The VOTER

Volume 46, Issue 4 - September 2014
Usually Published Monthly

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

President - Erika Graf-Webster

Vice President & Program for Study and Action
Gwen Hanson

Secretary - Sadie Valverde

Treasurer - Ruth Benjamins

Director, Membership
Johnnie Aldrich

Co-Directors, Voter Services
Marcia Anderson & Dale Yeo

Director Events and Speakers
Roberta Gran

Nominating Committee
Chair: Ardyth Norem
Elected Member: Sue Cain

Program for Study & Action

Affordable Housing
Vicki Simons -522-4813
Christina Little-373-1882

Education
Ruth Benjamins - 527-0204
Bonnie Burn - 526-0013

Election Procedures
Erika Graf-Webster

Health Care
Vicki Simons - 522-4813

Mental Health Services
(Vacant)

Quality of Life (Happiness)
Cynthia Pelak - (575) 496-3170

Voting Impediments
Roberta Gran - 373-8490

Water Issues
Win Jacobs - 521-9331

ACTION COMMITTEE
Barbara Goedecke - 522-0323

Web Master
Dale Yeo - 405-7580

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

Lunch with a Leader *(Continued from page 1)*

Sheriff's Office); creation of a Constituent and Community Services unit within the Manager's office; re-integrating the Roads Department back into the Engineering Department and expanding the Public Information Office. In her presentation on the 8th, she will provide the reasoning behind this restructuring as well as some budget detail.

Julia T. Brown, Esq., has been Doña Ana County Manager since December 1, 2013. She has worked at all levels of government in Oklahoma, Washington, D.C. and California, as well as in Corporate America. A former Assistant District Attorney and a former Assistant Attorney General in Oklahoma, Julia also served as an enlisted soldier and an Army Judge Advocate General's Corps (JAG) Officer. Julia retired as a Lieutenant Colonel and Deputy Commander of the 75th Legal Support Organization.

As County Manager, Brown is the sole direct-report employee of the Doña Ana County Board of Commissioners, and she oversees approximately 850 employees. She also coordinates budgetary support for the five elected officials who operate independent departments within the government.

Ms. Brown's education includes an undergraduate degree in political science from Oklahoma State University, a Juris Doctor from the University of Oklahoma College of Law, an LLM (Masters in Law in Military Justice awarded by the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's School at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. Additional graduate studies in public policy and public administration were completed at the Maxwell School (Citizenship & Public Affairs) of Syracuse University, and the L.B.J. School of Public Affairs, University of Texas Austin.

Julia Brown is a life member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) where she serves as National Vice President, and the NAACP.

We invite you to join us for lunch and the presentation!

CANDIDATES FORUMS

Las Cruces City Hall Chamber - Broadcast on CLC-TV

Tuesday, September 9, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

New Mexico Attorney General and Public Regulation Commission

Tuesday, October 7, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Magistrate Court Judges, County Commissioners, County Assessor, Probate Judge, and Sheriff

Tuesday, October 14, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

New Mexico House of Representatives

Sunday, October 5 - Voters Guide

Las Cruces Sun-News



President's Message

Here it is September already, and our Voter Services activities are moving into high gear. We will be holding three Candidate Forums (September 9, and October 7 and 14, see the Voter Services report on p. 4), and we will be producing the *Voters Guide*. In addition, we are planning voter registration events, some of which will be done via coordination or actual joint effort with CAFé, AAUW and the Ocotillo Institute Empowerment Congress. Such collaboration will ensure that we don't step on each other's toes with regard to scheduling voter registration events and will extend the reach of the League into some of the outlying communities. I'm excited about increasing our interaction with these organizations.



One important activity will be the support of and participation in the September 20 "Registration Fair." Due to a less than "user friendly" Soil & Water Conservation District mill levy election in April, Gwen Hanson and I met with Scott Krahling, Supervisor of Bureau of Elections, and Lynn Ellins, County Clerk. During that meeting, the idea was hatched to hold a major voter registration event in the city and turn it into a festive occasion – the "Registration Fair." The Bureau of Elections has adopted that idea, and the Registration Fair will be held on September 20 in Young Park, with music, free food, and lots of opportunities for citizens to register and mingle with the local candidates.

The LWVNM Board held its quarterly meeting in Albuquerque on July 19. Ardyth Norem and I attended. In addition to discussion of business issues facing the State League (for example, how to pay for printing and shipping of many copies of *La Palabra*), the bulk of the meeting was devoted to finalizing and approving questions for the state-wide *Voters Guide* which looks to be a very informative document. Our local *Voters Guide* will include all the state-wide *Voters Guide* information that pertain to candidates for whom we will be voting.

Big **THANKS** go to Ardyth Norem for her very hard work in getting our membership surveys completed and the results compiled. The survey results will be forwarded to members as a separate document.

Save the Date – We have a concurrence unit meeting scheduled for October 20 for LWVNM's new position on Natural Resources.

Erika

**Democracy rests on an informed public
and the public must be able to know
what public servants are doing in their name.**

NM Open Meeting Act (1974)



CORRECTION

*Membership Director
2014-2015*

- Bonnie Burn - (575) 526-0013
- Beth Bardwell - (575) 418-0288 (C)
- Jon Holtzman - (575) 621-7380 (C)
- Charlotte Lipson - (575) 527-4083

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY 2014-2015

Those directories not picked up at Lunch with a Leader on August 11 have been mailed.

If you did not receive a copy or have information changes, please contact:

Johnnie Aldrich

522-1544

jraldrich@earthlink.net

League Friends

- John Ameriks
- Anonymous
- Sharon Burbano
- Bob Burn
- Joseph Camunez, DDS
- Ken & Nancy Hall
- Pat Kratz
- Louise Lockhart
- Barbara Myers
- Clifford Pelton
- Nancy Phillips
- Betty Pool
- Sunspot Solar Energy
- Donna Tate

Thank you

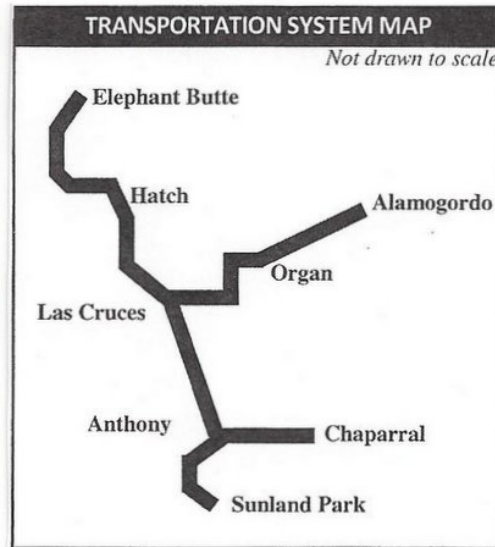
Look Back: South Central Regional Transit District - Sharon Thomas and Jack Valencia, Speakers

Reported by Bob Burn

In the November election, we will be asked to approve permanent funding for the South Central Regional Transit District (SCRTD). At this time, not much information for or against the district has been presented to the public. This has been done on purpose as the board of directors has been saving its publicity push until closer to the election. A presentation by Sharon Thomas and Jack Valencia at Lunch with a Leader on August 11 was the beginning of that push.

had no driver's license, and 5% did not have money for gas. The reasons that some form of reliable transportation is a major concern to the surveyed rural residents are: (1) health care including access to medical facilities, doctors, and pharmacies; (2) food, that is, access to grocery stores; (3) mental health which means feelings of isolation and the need to easily visit family and friends; (4) work; and (5) school including access to Doña Ana Community College and New Mexico State University.

Started in March, 2014, and ending in November, the SCRTD is a regional bus system pilot program within Doña Ana and Sierra Counties that interconnects seven municipalities: Las Cruces, Anthony, Alamogordo, Hatch, Truth or



The SCRTD pilot program was started with \$400,000 in funds provided by the counties and municipalities and services an area of 8,000 square miles. The system has six routes, some provided by the SCRTD and some from existing transit providers (Rio Grande Transit and Z-Trans) that include 73 stops along the routes: one from Alamogordo and one from Truth or Consequences (through Hatch) to and from Las

Consequences (Elephant Butte), Sunland Park, and Chaparral, as shown on the accompanying diagram. The idea for a regional bus system came from legislation passed in the NM legislature in 2003. There are currently four regional transit districts in the state. Census data show considerable pent-up demand for transit, especially in Anthony, Chaparral, Doña Ana, Hatch, Sunland Park, University Park, and Vado. The Empowerment Congress, a group composed of community leaders from rural communities in Doña Ana County, conducted a quality-of-life survey of mostly rural residents who live in areas not covered by census data. Lack of adequate transportation was found to be a major issue for these rural residents. From among those surveyed: 24% had no vehicle, 5% did not have the money to maintain a vehicle, 27%

Cruces; one from Sunland Park and one from Chaparral to and from Anthony; and two between Las Cruces and Anthony, one along Highway 28 and the other along Main Street. The timing of the routes is set up so that the arrival of buses from the outlying municipalities coincides with departure of buses between Anthony and Las Cruces. Within the Las Cruces area, riders can transfer to the city's Roadrunner Transit. In the first two months of operation, the system has provided rides to approximately 2,000 riders.

(Continued on page 5)

Look Back *(Continued from page 4)*

Permanent funding for the system will require \$10 million annually. Approval of the SCRTD tax in November will effectively cost the average household in Las Cruces about \$36 per year or 10¢ per day; a small amount to make life better for thousands of rural residents without reliable transportation. But, there are benefits for everyone. Every \$1 invested in the SCRTD system is expected to generate up to \$4 in increased income within the area served. Annual automobile expenses of \$6,251 for those with cars can be saved and fed back into community businesses. Increased areas of affordable housing for poor residents will be made available because transportation will have expanded to areas within the counties not previously accessible except by car. Job opportunities for drivers and mechanics will result. With permanent funding of SCRTD comes access to \$2.3 million in federal grants. In the long run, weekend and late night service is planned, and routes will be extended to the Santa Teresa complex in the south and to the spaceport in the north. The SCRTD tax seems a small price for each of us to pay to help our neighbors in need.



**Empowerment Congress
Ocotillo Institute for Social Justice**

The Empowerment Congress (EC) of Doña Ana County is a program of the Ocotillo Institute for Social Justice and is made possible through funding from the Kellogg Foundation and its sponsoring partner, The Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico.

The Empowerment Congress is composed of members from Doña Ana County, NM, committed to uniting their voices in support of their collective well being.

This is done by:

- Bringing people across Doña Ana County together in (a) Circle of learning, (b) Opportunities for engagement, and (c) Respectful and accessible space;
- Creating powerful community networks to improve how democracy works in Doña Ana County;
- Owning their power and responsibility to participate in the structures that affect their quality of life;
- Supporting and cultivating local leadership; and
- Creating change by acting on and using knowledge learned through the Empowerment Congress.

Begun in 2011 as the Quality of Life Initiative, it is now the Empowerment Congress. All decisions and activities are made by EC members who are from communities (17 of the 39 towns) around the county. People and organizations from various communities work together on quality of life issues. An executive planning committee helps to steer the EC. Current committees include public transportation, youth leadership, and health. Anyone can join and membership is free. To get involved, contact Amanda Formica at (575) 521-4794 or email: amanda@cfsnm.org.

[Source: Brochure, Empowerment Congress of Doña Ana County.]

Community Tackles Social Justice Issues

Reported by Bonnie Burn

Not much has been written in the local newspapers about community efforts to combat poverty and increase the quality of life for residents in Doña Ana County. Although many initiatives are going forward, I want to raise your awareness about three of them: Viva Doña Ana project, Ocotillo Institute for Social Justice, and Doña Ana County Collective Impact Education Partnership. The League has been represented in all three of these efforts.



VIVA DOÑA ANA In 2011, the Camino Real Consortium applied for and won a \$2 million Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant funded by the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, a collaboration among the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In 2009, these three departments formed a partnership to help communities improve access to affordable housing and transportation while protecting the environment. Viva Doña Ana seeks to integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure developments in a manner that empowers the residents of the region to consider how all of these factors work together to create more jobs, economic opportunities and increased quality of life for generations of county residents. On July 9 a workshop was held for public discussion of a comprehensive plan for the corridor of communities extending from Sunland Park to Hatch.



The Ocotillo Institute for Social Justice grew out of an effort to address quality of life issues in Doña Ana County. About five years ago, Doña Ana County Commissioner Billy Garrett and Sarah Nolan, Executive Director, CAFé, convened a meeting to which residents throughout Doña

Ana County were invited to discuss social justice issues relevant to the county. Following the first meeting, individual community meetings were held throughout the county that focused on empowering residents to resolve their community issues. For the past two years, discussion of these issues have continued at NMSU through the J. Paul Taylor Seminars for Social Justice, sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences. In 2013, Commissioner Garrett took this initiative to the Community Foundation and formed the Ocotillo Institute, a non-profit organization that continues to work on social justice issues through two components, the Empowerment Congress and Council of Advocates. The Empowerment Congress is made up of representatives throughout communities (including the colonias) in Doña Ana County. Members work with local governments to bring solutions to social justice issues. The Council of Advocates includes the provider agencies and organizations, elected officials, and others in the community who work on collective impact initiatives and resources to solve the problems. In collaboration with the Viva Doña Ana Project, the Empowerment Congress is working to create a regional public transportation system that connects communities within Doña Ana and Sierra Counties.



Doña Ana County Collective Impact Education Partnership is an initiative

developed by the Institute for Community Engagement (IFCE) now renamed Ngage New Mexico. IFCE was founded as a nonprofit organization in 2009 when a group of residents came together with the idea of creating a better community for everyone-- mission statement: to serve as a catalyst to advance the well-being of all people of southern New Mexico. Jane Asche, League member and involved with IFCE since its

(Continued on page 7)

Social Justice *(Continued from page 6)*

inception, introduced League members to IFCE at a Lunch with a Leader meeting in June 2012. Since that date, Ngage NM has acquired five full time staff members with Frank Lopez as its Executive Director to carry out its mission. Ngage NM also achieved a three-year grant from the W.F. Kellogg Foundation to implement a collective impact initiative focused on improving education outcomes for all children in Doña Ana County.

The initiative is not a program or a project. It is a process or an approach to complex social issues that can only be solved by members from all sectors of the community working together and taking shared responsibility for the outcomes. A Pathway to Success from birth to workforce illustrates the process. The outcomes listed below are examples of common community level outcomes that have been selected in the 100+ communities across the country and the world that are engaging in collective impact initiatives related to education:

- Every child is prepared to enter kindergarten.
- Every child is proficient in reading.
- Every child is proficient in math.
- Every child graduates from high school prepared to enter the workforce or postsecondary education.

Success for each of these goals would be achieved through Collaborative Action Networks that are groups of organizations and people who are already working on a particular area of the continuum and particular areas of outcomes. For example, to reach kindergarten readiness, childhood education centers, nonprofits like the Children's Reading Foundation, and early childhood health advocates would commit to working together for this particular outcome.

These three initiatives that are focused on improving quality of life for residents of Doña Ana County are underway. Each is addressing a different area of need. Can you imagine what will happen if our entire community comes together to work on achieving the goals of each of these initiatives?

Board Highlights - August 7, 2014, 1:30-3:30 p.m., City Hall, Conference Room 2007A

- Membership count for 2014-2015 is 73 (48 individuals, 24 household, and one honorary member (50 years of membership). Membership Directories were distributed at the August 11 Lunch with a Leader meeting and mailed to members who did not attend. Membership survey report is being written and will be discussed at the September 4 Board meeting.
- Johnnie Aldrich conducted the annual Treasurer's account reconciliation and found the accounts to be in order.
- Voter Services activities for the 2014 General Election were accepted (see p. 8).
- Reports were received from the Education Committee (Ruth Benjamins), Quality of Life/Well Being (Gwen Hanson), Affordable Housing (Christina Little), Water Issues (Win Jacobs) and Health (Vicki Simons)
- Legislative priorities for 2014 were identified as (1) Education, (2) Affordable Housing, (3) Water and (4) Health Care. Meetings will be arranged with Doña Ana State Legislators to discuss these issues. Committee chairs were asked to develop questions and fact sheets for these meetings to help with the discussion. Final arrangements will be discussed at the September 4 Board meeting.
- Based on the LWVUS position on poverty, the League will continue to follow and support increasing the minimum wage and capping storefront-lending interest rates.



League News



LWV of Greater Las Cruces

Voter Services

Marcia Anderson & Dale Yeo, Co-Directors

Voter services activities are underway in anticipation of the **November 4 General Election**.

Candidates Forums will be held in the Las Cruces City Council Chambers on the dates listed below. The forums will be televised live on the city's CLC-TV, Comcast Cable Channel 20, and will be rebroadcast up to November 4. Arrangements are being made to have a simultaneous Spanish translation during the forums.

- **Tuesday, September 9, 6:00-7:30 p.m.**
New Mexico Attorney General and the Public Regulation Commission.
- **Tuesday, October 7, 6:00-8:00 p.m.**
Magistrate Court Judges, County Commissioners, County Assessor, Probate Judges and Sheriff.
- **Tuesday, October 14, 6:00-8:00 p.m.**
New Mexico House of Representatives

Thank you to Roberta Gran, Gracia Class, Johnnie Aldrich, Bonnie Burn, Sue Cain, Dale Yeo and Gwen Hanson who have already volunteered to assist. **More League members are needed** to help as greeters and question runners, question reviewers, and as timekeepers.

To volunteer, please contact Marcia Anderson, tel: (575) 523-1317 or email: maanders211@yahoo.com.

Voters Guide: The Las Cruces Sun-News is publishing the League's **Voters Guide**. At a meeting with members of the Sun-News, we established that the Sunday edition has the highest readership; therefore, the October 5

edition was selected as the distribution date. This distribution occurs two days before early voting starts on October 7 at the Doña Ana County Government Center, 845 N. Motel Blvd. The Guide also will be available to distribute at the candidates forums in October. Questions for the *Voters Guide* will be selected from among those questions submitted by League members at the August 11. Questionnaires will be emailed to the candidates with a return date of September 9 for responses by the candidates.

Voter Registration: The League will be registering voters at the **Voter Registration Fair** organized by the Bureau of Elections and supported by the League. The event is scheduled for Saturday, September 20, 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. in Young Park. Enjoy free food and music, and mix and mingle with the candidates running for office while you register voters. Arrangements also are being made to register voters at other locations. Voters have to register if they are first-time voters, have changed address, have changed name, or want to change party affiliation. Voter registration closes on October 7.

To volunteer to make this Fair and other registration events successes, please contact Marjorie Burr, tel: 522-2528 or email: burrmmb@aol.com.

Water Issues: Members who are interested in current drought conditions and what is happening with water in NM are invited to attend the next committee meeting scheduled for Friday, September 19, 1:00 p.m. at Good Samaritan, Bldg. E, West Lounge. Philip J. King, Associate Professor and Associate Department Head, Civil Engineering, NMSU, will be helping us understand the hydrology of our region. You do not have to be a member of the committee to attend.

LWV of Greater Las Cruces (Continued)

Education Committee: *Ruth Benjamins and Bonnie Burn, Co-Chairs*

During June, the paper, *For-Profit Virtual Charter Schools: Literature Review and Report*, was widely distributed to the Doña Ana County state legislators, U.S. Senators and Representatives, NM Legislative Education Study Council members, Public Education Commissioners and local school district representatives. U.S. Senator Heinrich's office contacted us to discuss the paper. Public Education Commissioners Jeff Carr, Eugene Gant, and Carolyn Shearman also responded. There is one correction to the paper and that is the NM Connections Academy was authorized by the Public Education Commission (PEC) not Secretary-Designate Hanna Skandera as noted in the paper. A revised copy of this paper is posted on the League's web site, www.lwvglc.org.

A commentary about the issue of for-profit virtual charter schools was published in the Las Cruces Sun-News on July 13, "Public Schools Should Not Be Profit Centers. Additionally, it appears on KRWG's web site, under Local Viewpoints.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 18, 2:30-4:20 p.m., Good Samaritan, Bldg. E, West Lounge.

Quality of Life & Well-Being - *Cynthia Pelak, Chair*

The LWVGLC Quality of Life & Well-Being Study committee is nearing the completion of its study. The first presentation of its findings to members will take place at an information unit meeting during the last week in September.

The Quality of Life Study was organized around three distinct goals. The first goal was to develop a working knowledge of the quality of life and well-being development model and global movement. The second goal was to research how this approach is currently being utilized by governmental and

non-governmental entities in Doña Ana County. The final goal was to examine how civic engagement, a concept of particular interest to the mission and work of the League, is included within quality-of-life models and to consider the possibilities of measuring civic engagement in Doña Ana County. In pursuing these goals, the committee reviewed the literature on quality of life and well-being approaches and interviewed key governmental and non-governmental officials in the area who are applying a quality of life approach to their assessment, planning and decision-making.

The time and place of the informational meeting will be announced in early September. The Committee hopes you will join us to learn more about the study and to discuss how a quality of life framework is being utilized in our community. For more information please contact: Cynthia Pelak, Chair, (at 575) 496-3170.

Health Care in Doña Ana County - *Vicki Simons, Chair*

This study committee is just getting underway and is looking for additional members. The scope of work for the committee is to review the League's current position (Membership Directory, p. 31); to educate members about the current state of health care reform as the Affordable Care Act is implemented in NM; and to investigate the possibility of reform at the state level.

To volunteer to work on this study, please contact Vicki Simons at 522-4813.

Election Procedures - *Erika Graf-Webster, Chair*

This long-standing committee is being reactivated to look at a variety of topics related to elections (i.e., voter suppression, money in local politics, open primaries, and other election topics).

To volunteer, please contact Erika Graf-Webster at 521-0600 or eqrafwebster@q.com.



League News



League of Women Voters of the United States

Statement of Position on Human Trafficking - As adopted at the LWVUS 2014 National Convention

The League of Women Voters opposes all forms of domestic and international human trafficking of adults and children, including sex trafficking and labor trafficking. We consider human trafficking to be a form of modern-day slavery and believe that every measure should be taken and every effort should be made through legislation and changes in public policy to prevent human trafficking. Prosecution and penalization of traffickers and abusers should be established, and exiting laws should be strictly enforced. Extensive essential services for victims should be applied where needed. Education and awareness programs on human trafficking should be established in our communities and in our schools.

Structures of Democracy - In an effort to reclaim our democracy, delegates at the 2014 LWVUS Convention adopted a three part Structure of Democracy program that includes (1) a committee to review national's **campaign finance** position, (2) a study of the process of **amending the U.S. Constitution**, and (3) a committee on **redistricting**. This effort is concentrated on reclaiming our democracy. LWVUS has issued a call for volunteer members to serve on the campaign finance committee, and has established the redistricting committee (see article below). Activation of amending the U.S. Constitution remains pending.

LWVUS Redistricting Task Force Announced - The 2014-2016 LWVUS Program on key, specific structures of American Democracy includes a review of

the redistricting process for the U.S. Congress for the purpose of developing action steps. The Redistricting Task Force will (1) review the various methods and criteria that have been used in the states and the positions of state Leagues on redistricting, (2) consider how well the methods and criteria have worked, (3) develop materials to educate Leagues and communities, and (4) make recommendations about next steps. The Task Force is chaired by Chris Carson, LWVUS Board, and includes members from Indiana, Virginia, Washington, California, Iowa, Oregon, New Hampshire, Minnesota, Alaska, and Florida.

Women Get the Vote, 94th Anniversary - August 26 marks the 94th Anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that gave women the right to vote. Marring the celebration, however, is the one year anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder* case. That decision gutted key provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and opened the door for discrimination to gain a better foothold at the ballot box.

Early in 2014, the League was hopeful when a bipartisan group of legislators introduced the Voting Rights Amendment Act (VRAA) that would modernize the election process and protect voting rights against discrimination. Hope of achieving a legislative fix was dashed, however, when Congress failed to move the legislation forward.

In a few short months, voters will be heading to the polls and will do so without the full protection of the Voting Rights Act.



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.

Las Cruces Public Schools (LCPS)

Board Meeting, August 19, 2014, 6:30 p.m., Administration Building - *Sadie Valverde, Observer*

The meeting was called to order by President Bonnie Votaw. All Board members were present. Superintendent Rounds was absent for a brief time due to an emergency at Picacho Middle School.

Mindy Tapia, 2015 Teacher of the Year, was recognized along with the following runners-up: (1) Rachel Knight (2) Ann Marie Gardner and (3) Melly Locke.

Deputy Superintendent Steven Sanchez introduced new principals and assistant principals. He gave an update on Doña Ana County Commissioners' Spaceport Resolution that proposes to redistribute 60% of GRT funding that is currently designated for county school districts.

Associate Superintendent for Human Resources Elizabeth Marrufo reported the current LCPS student enrollment is 24,103. She also reviewed open teacher positions and expected that the openings will be filled by September.

Andrea Fletcher, Associate Superintendent, gave an update about the Summer 2014 Turnaround Initiative that is a leadership model for student success developed by the University of Virginia. Some principals participated in leadership training and other principals and teacher leaders met to analyze PARCC assessment (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). Three teachers spoke about their experience with the model and how they will

use it with their students.

In his report, Associate Superintendent Terry Dean presented routine financial reports and addressed issues related to vendor payments. He also gave fourth quarter reports for LCPS and Las Montaña's Charter School whose financial reports were found to be within legally authorized budgets and materially correct.

In his Instruction Report, Steven Sanchez, Deputy Superintendent:

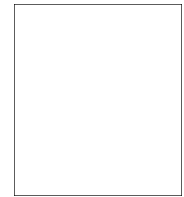
- Called on Joy Walkey, who reported that LCPS is in compliance with Title IX for secondary schools for this School Year.
- Asked Dr. Maria Artiaga to discuss the 2013-2014 Head Start Assessment, a 14-page report that demonstrates that the program is operating appropriately and that uses data to assess the progress students are making. The goal is to achieve student readiness for school. Dr. Artiaga also gave an informational update on the Head Start Program. The five-year grant has been renewed. Head Start Programs are now available at 11 school sites, and 16 of the open 19 positions have been filled.
- Reviewed the Professional Development Plan for this school year. The plan is designed to increase knowledge, skills and attitude that ensure a successful classroom experience for the students and the teachers. LCPS adopted the definition of professional development as "a comprehensive, sustained approach to improving all employees' effectiveness in their role for the ultimate purpose of enhancing professional career growth and to ensure that all students reach their full potential."

(Note: This report contains information from on-site observations and the meeting packet.)



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



FIRST CLASS

CANDIDATES FORUM
 NM Attorney General & PRC
 Tuesday, September 9, 6-7:30 p.m.
 Las Cruces City Hall Chamber
 CLC-TV, Comcast Cable Ch 20

0

EXTRA
LWVGLC Committee Reports
11:00 A.M. BEFORE
LUNCH WITH A LEADER

Membership Application

After November 1 - \$30 for Individual;
 \$15 for each additional household member
 Annually: \$60 Individual; \$30 Second
 Household; \$30 Students

Name: _____
 2nd Household: _____
 Address: _____
 City/State/Zip: _____
 Email: _____
 Telephone: _____

Contributions:

_____ **League of Women Voters Education
 Fund (Tax Deductible)**
 _____ **Contribute to LWV of Greater Las
 Cruces (Not tax deductible)**

Mail checks to LWV of Greater Las Cruces,
 P.O. Box 8322, Las Cruces, NM 88006

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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