



The VOTER

August-September 2014 VOL. 61, ISSUE 4

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League of Women Voters of Washington County, AR

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September 9 (Tuesday) • EARLY VOTING BEGINS FOR ANNUAL SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS & **DEADLINE FOR ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATION SUBMISSION BY MAIL, FAX, or EMAIL** • **ARTICLE: SCHOOL STARTING MEANS SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION TIME** • By Joyce Hale • Page 2

September 13 (Saturday) • WAL-MART VOTER REGISTRATION • **ARTICLE: FROM THE PRESIDENT** • By Mary Alice Serafini • Page 1

September 16 (Tuesday) • ANNUAL SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

September 19 (Friday) • 10:00 AM • ARKANSAS WATER PLAN PUBLIC MEETING • U of A Pauline Whitaker Animal Science Center-Room 109, 1335 West Knapp, Fayetteville • *READ Arkansas Water Plan Executive Summary at www.arwaterplan.arkansas.gov*

September 19 (Friday) • 9:00 AM–4:00 PM • **WE THE PEOPLE: 14th ANNUAL HISPANIC WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION OF ARKANSAS CONFERENCE** • Jones Center in Springdale • **ARTICLE by Libby Wheeler** • Page 3

September 23 (Tuesday) • NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY • Help Us Register More Voters! Help us get the word out by visiting <http://www.nationalvoterregistrationday.org/> or www.lwv.org for the best ways.”

September 24 (Wednesday) • 6:00-7:30 PM • LEAGUE MEMBER MEETING: BALLOT ISSUES & CHANGING ARKANSAS'S CONSTITUTION • Facilitator: Berni Kurz/Washington County Extension Agent Staff Chair • Fayetteville Public Library • **ARTICLE: DO YOU REALLY KNOW WHAT THE BALLOT AMENDMENTS MEAN?** • Joyce Hale • Page 4

October 6 (Monday) • **VOTER REGISTRATION DEADLINE FOR GENERAL ELECTION WHICH INCLUDES NON-PARTISAN RACES FOR MAYOR, CITY COUNSEL, ETC....**

October 15 (Wednesday) • 6:00-7:00 PM • ADVOCACY MEETING • Facilitator: Bill Kopsky/Arkansas Public Policy Panel Director. • Venue TBD

October 24 (Friday) • **WATER PLAN UPDATE COMMENT DEADLINE** • Comments may be made verbally, eMailed to arkansaswataer@cdsmith.com, or submitted by mail to the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, Attention: Water Plan, 101 East Capitol Avenue/Suite 350, Little Rock, AR 72201.

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FROM THE LWWC PRESIDENT

By Mary Alice Serafini

The League of Women Voters of Washington County topped off an active League year with multiple accomplishments. Joyce Hale and J.P. Peters were key individuals in the reorganization of the League of Women Voters of Arkansas and Joyce stepped in to serve as Treasurer. J.P. Peters attended the National Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States. Both of these accomplishments address the fact that all members of LWWC are also members of LWVAR and LWVUS! LWWC membership in Arkansas Citizens First Congress became meaningful as Joyce attended the pre-conference followed by conference attendance by Libby Wheeler, Bettie Lu Lancaster, Nancy Kahanuk and myself. With a theme of “Mental illness is not a crime,” the efforts of the Judicial Equality for Mental Health Task Force became a priority for ACFC and all of us in the next legislative session. Members have continued to advocate for protection of water quality, particularly in our own watersheds and the Buffalo River watershed (see “**CAFO Caper In The Buffalo River Watershed,**” page 2). Most recently, our partnership with Advocates for Families and Children for advocacy training was stimulating, thought-provoking and action-oriented. Stay tuned for our October program on Advocacy where all of us will actualize our advocacy!

The new League year will be active and, hopefully, engaging for League members. Begin thinking about questions for candidates running for office as we will be soliciting answers from the candidates and publishing through any means that we have. Get ready for the membership meeting in September where we explore the ballot amendments. Wouldn't it be great if we could turn around and articulate and educate others following that event?

Now, this is a call for volunteers! Wal-Mart Corporate Office has sought out a non-partisan organization to **register voters on September 13**. The League is the organization of choice! Please contact me if you would like to volunteer. This will be a few hours in Bentonville in which we register Wal-Mart employees, many of whom may have just moved to Northwest Arkansas, to become voters. My e-mail is ma@mapeaks.com and phone is 479-466-1624.

I am looking forward to an energetic, energizing League year and am so pleased that you will be a part of it!

SCHOOL STARTING MEANS SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION TIME

By Joyce Hale

In a year focused on high profile November elections, it is easy to overlook school board elections and the importance they mean for communities. There are only two contested positions in Washington County. Records show that over the past three school board elections, only 2.3 percent of registered voters have cast ballots. In 2011, only 228 voters out of 11,716 registered voters went to the ballot box. That's only a 1.9 percent turnout! **Early local School Board voting begins on Tuesday, September 9 and ends on Tuesday, September 16.**

FAYETTEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT # 1

| POLLING PLACE | PRECINCTS | ZONE |
|---|-----------------------------|--------|
| Central United Methodist Church (Dickson St) | Fay P-4, Fay P-5, Fay P-36 | Zone 5 |
| Christ's Church (15th Street) | Fay P-1, Fay P-10, Fay P-15 | Zone 5 |
| Wiggins Methodist Church (W. Martin Luther King Blvd) | Fay 24 | Zone 5 |

Fayetteville Zone 5- 5 Year Term: Sample Ballot

| CANDIDATES & MILLAGE | Tim Hudson | Timothy Hollis | Millage 45.65/ No Change |
|----------------------|------------|----------------|--------------------------|
|----------------------|------------|----------------|--------------------------|

*All other Fayetteville School District Precincts are eligible to vote on the Millage Only (There is no change in the Millage). Voting for Millage Only with No Change for Zones 1, 2, 3 and 4 will be at Wiggins Methodist Church. Millage Only Sample Ballot

SPRINGDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT #50

| POLLING PLACE | PRECINCTS | ZONE |
|---|---|--------|
| Bethel Heights: Moose Lodge #877 West Apple Blossom | All Benton County Precincts | Zone 3 |
| Elmdale Baptist Church (West End & Huntsville) | Spr P-1, Spr P-6, Spr P-9, Spr P-16, Spr P-18 | Zone 3 |

Springdale Zone 3- 5 Year Term: Sample Ballot

| CANDIDATES & MILLAGE | Kathy McFetridge | Henry Pudder Hudson | Millage 40.5/ No Change |
|----------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
|----------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|

CAFO CAPER IN THE BUFFALO RIVER WATERSHED

by Anna Weeks

Voters interested in how we got into this mess over a hog farm near Arkansas's crown jewel and national treasure, the Buffalo River, should become familiar with Arkansas's permitting process and ballot measure SJR7. Voters will have an opportunity to decide where decisions about rulemaking changes should take place – in a state agency or a legislative committee.

For an update on activity with C&H hog farm in Newton County, Anna Weeks, Arkansas Public Policy Panel's Environmental Policy Coordinator, provided the following information:

In April the Arkansas Public Policy Panel and the Ozark Society filed petitions to prohibit certain swine operations in the Buffalo National River Watershed. The petitions seek parallel changes to Arkansas Pollution Control



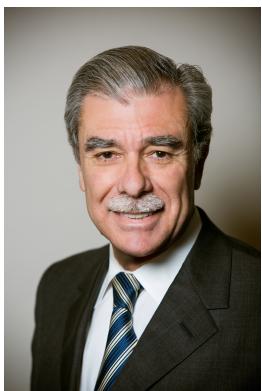
and Ecology Commission Regulations 5 and 6 to prohibit the Director of the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality from issuing new permits to swine operations in the Buffalo National River Watershed with 750 or more swine weighing 55 pounds or more, or 3,000 or more swine weighing less than 55 pounds. Both rulemakings contain provision to allow existing facilities in the Buffalo National River Watershed to seek a permit renewal, permit modification, or transfer between Regulation 5 and 6 permitting schemes.

The rulemakings address a defined and specific concern in the Buffalo National River Watershed. The siting of industrial hog farms in the Buffalo National River pose a threat to the public health, water quality, and economy of communities in and surrounding the Watershed from the land application of swine wastes and catastrophic failures of waste holding ponds. The rulemaking documents can be found here: http://www.adeq.state.ar.us/regs/drafts/draft_regs.htm

On June 17, 2014 a public hearing was held in Harrison, Arkansas to accept comments from citizens on the proposed changes. Around 100 citizens turned out for the hearing voicing concerns for and against the proposed changes. The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality accepted written comments until July 1, 2014. Over 2,000 comments were submitted with a large majority of comments being in support of the changes. A responsive summary to comments is currently being prepared. **The next step, likely to occur in September, will be review of the proposed changes by legislative committees.** The proposed regulation will then go before the Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission for final adoption.

For more information contact: Anna Weeks, APPP annaw@arpanel.org or Bob Cross, Ozark Society, racross@uark.edu

WE THE PEOPLE: 14th ANNUAL HISPANIC WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION OF ARKANSAS CONFERENCE By Libby Wheeler



The League of Women Voters of Washington County wants all Hispanic citizens to be registered, informed and participating in the political forum. This is a step in the process of assimilation and economic advancement. LWVWC has been invited to provide a panel at the Hispanic Women of Arkansas's Conference to discuss community integration, leadership and civic participation among all Arkansans. As more immigrants in Arkansas become American citizens, the new demographics can constitute a powerful influence that political parties need to consider. Although voting is the most common indicator of civic participation, for immigrants it does not always translate into political representation. However, voting is not the only way to exercise influence. During the conference, participants will explore the relationships that exist among group consciousness, civic and political participation, and community recognition.

Special guest for the conference and luncheon speaker is Carlos Gutierrez, Former U. S. Secretary of Commerce. The event is open to the public. Registration and luncheon reservations may be arranged by calling 479-751-9494. The event will take place **Friday, September 19, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, at the Jones Center for Families in Springdale.**

JUDICIAL EQUALITY FOR MENTAL ILLNESS (JEMI) UPDATE By Nancy Kahanak

The stigma of mental illness is one cause for the imbalance in treatment for a mental illness as compared with a physical illness. The Judicial Equality for Mental Illness (JEMI) coalition is focusing on educating Arkansas Legislators and the public this year.

JEMI supports the Mental Health First Aid model (MHFA) of educating communities about mental illness – an approach similar to the Red Cross first aid for physical illness. The Arkansas Department of Behavioral Health Services or DBHS, has endorsed the Ozark Guidance MHFA team for a pilot project targeting rural law enforcement in Northwest Arkansas. That program is named “Improving Outcomes.”

The coalition has been working closely with DBHS, Ozark Guidance, and the Sheriffs’ Departments of Washington and Benton Counties in finding workable solutions for reducing the number of persons with mental illness entering jail. When there are adequate psychiatric services for mental illness in the community, people with the disease do not end up in jails. (Continued on page 4 . . .)



DBHS has submitted their new budget, which includes mobile crisis teams across the State, a statewide crisis line at a single location, and paid Peer counseling.

JEMI meets the second Wednesday of each month from 10 am to noon, alternating the Washington and Benton County Sheriffs Administration Building. Anyone is welcome to attend. For questions or more information call Nancy Kahanak, (479)935-5013.

DO YOU REALLY KNOW WHAT THE BALLOT AMENDMENTS MEAN?

By Joyce Hale

The September LWVWC membership program will kick off an important election year with information needed by voters in November. Three constitutional amendments proposed by the 2013 Legislature as well as petition initiated items will appear on the ballot for voter approval, if a sufficient number of petition signatures are certified. To discuss the positions of those supporting or opposing these items will be Berni Kurz, Washington County Cooperative Extension Agent, and Kristin Higgins, Program Associate with the Arkansas Public Policy Center in Little Rock.

The Legislature's proposed amendments are:

HJR1009 THE ARKANSAS ELECTED OFFICIALS ETHICS, TRANSPARENCY, AND FINANCIAL REFORM.

SJR7 AN AMENDMENT TO THE ARKANSAS CONSTITUTION CONCERNING THE REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES BY A LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE.

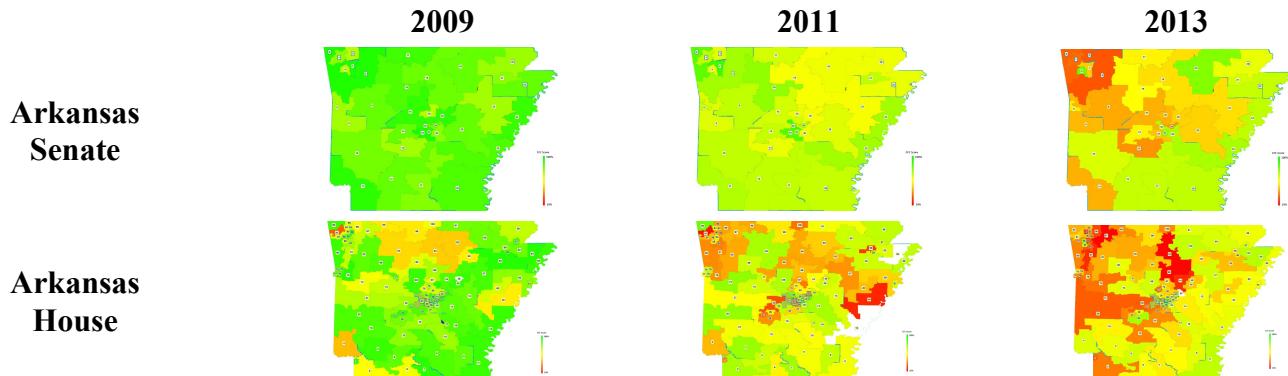
SJR16 PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO ARTICLE 5, SECTION 1, OF THE ARKANSAS CONSTITUTION CONCERNING INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM; AND PROVIDING CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CORRECTION OR AMENDMENT OF INSUFFICIENT STATE-WIDE PETITIONS.

This program will take place at the Walker Room of the Fayetteville Library on Wednesday, September 24. Members are urged to come and renew their memberships and bring guests to join. A social mixer will start at 5:30 with the program beginning at 6:00.

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR LEGISLATIVE FUNDING

By Joyce Hale, League of Women Voters of Arkansas Team Leader

The Arkansas Public Policy Panel (APPP) is concerned about a shift in the legislative priorities in the Arkansas Legislature. **Support for key civil rights, economic, education, environmental and public health issues shows a 25% decline in only four years!** Maps showing the areas where there has been a shift from green to red indicating a decline in commitment to these issues. Prevention of backward slippage will require much greater civic engagement, especially with out-of-state funding targeting Arkansans in key races.



To address this concern, leaders from statewide organizations met June 26 and 27 in Little Rock. The primary discussion involved today's use of databases, social media and collaboration to become more effective. These tools are now widely used by moneyed interests to their advantage. In self-defense, a greater level of sophistication and campaign strategy is essential if a group hopes to have a voice in the outcome. The data system, Voter Activated Network (VAN), was featured and is already in use by several large non-profits in Arkansas. A year's access to this data has been purchased by the APPP and will be made available to all of its member organizations at no charge. Some training will also be provided. (Continued on page 5 . . .)

Other states with similar problems in introducing legislation are now more successfully operating after creating “state tables.” The physical coming together of leaders is essential. Understanding the others’ capability, activity and commonality adds greater impact and eliminates duplication of effort. Joining together provides a chance for training and increased civic capacity. The concept of the “table” is to provide an invisible, organizational glue. The collaboration is not based on issues, but rather an understanding of collective resources and a means of working together when goals overlap. Costs to establish and maintain a state table with its own leadership and electronic databases must be shared by all participating or find grants to support this concept.

The name **Arkansas Civic Engagement Table (ACET)** was proposed. This group has already begun developing a strategy for an action plan with the idea of producing a grant proposal for funding. The energy and commitment to accept this challenge was clear, as was the level of concern that the erosion of progressive ideas must be stopped.

LWWC MEMBERS ARE NEEDED TO ADVOCATE FOR LEGISLATION REFORM



Soon LWWC members will be asked contact legislators about bills introduced into the 2015 Legislative session. Advocacy for priority issues selected at the Citizens First Congress (CFC) is needed to fulfill our obligation as a member of this umbrella organization. Mary Alice Serafini, Libby Wheeler, Bettie Lu Lancaster and Nancy Kahanak waged a successful campaign to win CFC’s support for Judicial Equality for Mental Illness (JEMI) in combination with other jail and prison reforms. Organizations, which make up the CFC, depend on statewide member advocacy to influence legislators. Issues that you will be hearing more about and need your support are:

- Create a Civil Rights Commission
- Support JEMI and other jail reforms
- Oppose punitive immigration reforms
- Protect against wage theft
- Support a new state water plan
- Support green energy reforms
- Expand learning for ALL kids
- Increase poll worker training and eligibility
- Protect landowner rights regarding pipelines
- Support Private Option Medicaid Expansion

LWVUS - 51ST NATIONAL CONVENTION - POWER: Our VOICES, Our VOTES By J. P. Peters

The 51st National Convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) was held June 6-10, 2014, in Dallas, Texas. The theme for this year’s convention was POWER: Our VOICES, Our VOTES. Delegates “hit the ground running” with activities beginning at noon on Friday and ending around noon the following Tuesday. Based on topics of interest to delegates, it was evident that the top five were:

The consensus of the delegates was that one of the most important areas of focus for the League is to grow

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1) | Voting Rights, Protections, Registration – State Voter Identification Laws - Restoring Voting Rights to Ex-Felons |
| 2) | Affordable Care Act |
| 3) | Campaign Financing |
| 4) | Economic Inequality/Living Wage |
| 5) | Recruit Younger Members –Build League Membership |

its membership and to develop more creative ways to reach out and involve younger members, as well as other diverse community groups. The *Affordable Care Act and Beyond* caucus was highly attended. The ACA continues to be a major focus of the League; however, it was stressed that we need to look beyond or to what’s next for the ACA. The committee invited me to become a member of the group working on this issue.

One surprising point was made regarding the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA). According to the NVRA, Health Benefits Exchanges (HBEs) are required to provide voter registration opportunities to enrollees in order to be in full compliance. I am doing further research on this and if true, I will follow up with Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to ensure states have included voter registration as one of the services provided by the HBE.

Second only to the ACA caucus was *Building a Diverse League: How to Recruit Younger Members*. The session was conducted by four members of the LWV Young People Taskforce. Examples of other caucuses that received a lot of attention were: Restoring Voting Rights to Ex-Felons, Economic Inequality Study/Living Wage Concurrence, Stepping Up Our Game: Reducing Carbon Emissions, Combating Climate Change: What Our League Can Do, Effective Voter Registration: Are You Reaching the Most New Voters?, and Prison Gerrymandering – A Problem in Your State?

Delegates had a wide selection of training tracks or workshops to choose from, i.e., *Effective Statewide Campaigns for Our Democracy, Advocacy 101: Learn the Basics of Lobbying*, etc. The most popular one was *Money in Politics: Developing a Common Understanding of the Issues*. Some of the comments and/or points discussed during this session were: “...elected officials failing to take action,” “unlimited amounts through super PACs,” “...corporate funds to influence elections,” “money equals speech,” “Supreme Court is on the way to eliminating all limits – means more power and more corruption.”

The convention topics addressed by the speakers included: Governing Today in Our Communities and States, State of Voting Rights, and Organizing for Civil Impact and Renewal. Some of the more memorable quotes were:

| | |
|---|--|
| 1) "...oldest profession (not what you think) is government." | 4) "States are missing out on \$11.4 B in online retail sales." |
| 2) "Government is not a necessary evil – it is a necessity." | 5) "If we don't pay attention to these changes, <u>we can plan to fail.</u> " (Pertaining to changes in demographics.) |
| 3) "You don't become mayor by promising not to do things." | |

The LWVUS adopted a concurrence with New Jersey's position on human trafficking. It enables Leagues to advocate for Federal and state legislation, enforcement, stricter regulations, and increased victim protection locally, statewide, and internationally. There was a motion to consider the Kansas LWV position on the living wage, which did not pass. A motion was made to consider adoption of a study on economic inequality, which would identify the social and political impacts of economic inequality on our democracy. There was much discussion on this topic and strong feelings about conducting a study; however, this did not pass due to the number of questions raised during the discussion on the motion.

A motion to increase the per-member payment (PMP) by \$1 for the 2015-2016 year was also approved. That will increase the PMP rate to \$32. Deirdre Macnab was nominated from the floor for LWVUS President. There was a debate between the current president Elizabeth MacNamara and Deirdre. Both presented themselves as strong candidates and both made excellent points as far as the future of the League. In the end, Elizabeth MacNamara was re-elected as LWVUS President.

Although everyone was exhausted from the lack of sleep and food, it was a powerful and empowering experience to be with such knowledgeable, dedicated women – doing important work for the citizens of our Country. As I left the convention, my head was spinning with ideas and determination to promote and support the efforts of the LWVWC and the LWVAR in building our membership and educating the public about the "facts" on issues we support. I recommend that every member attend at least one convention. It will change your perspective on what the League is all about as an organization. The Convention Planning Committee, which included the LWV of Dallas, is to be commended for a very successful convention. The next convention will be held in Washington, DC in 2016. *For more information on the convention, copies of handouts and PowerPoint Presentations, you can visit the League's website – www.lwv.org