



VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Johnson County

How To Reach Us

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Since 1920, the League of Women Voters has been a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

General Meeting Saturday, February 7

Atonement Lutheran Church – 9948 Metcalf

8:30 a.m. – Socializing

9 - 11 a.m. – Program

11 a.m. - noon – LWV JoCo Board Meeting

“Climate Change Hits Home: Challenges and Solutions for Kansas”

Come hear how climate change is impacting our state and learn about the many potential solutions we have in our own backyards. Eileen Horn, Director, Outreach and Education for the Climate and Energy Project of the Salina-based Land Institute will offer Kansas-specific climate impacts, wind energy updates, energy efficiency tips, policy proposals and legislative updates.

We look forward to seeing you

One feature that attracts many to League is our in-depth study of issues. League's history and policy is to undertake intensive study of an issue, discuss it in small groups, and through consensus arrive upon a position. We have position statements of issues on a national, state and local (Johnson County) basis.



President's Message

The Johnson County League started the year with a meeting to recommend areas of study for next year. I was pleased with the variety of ideas that were presented by those who attended. The group recommended that we ask the membership at the annual meeting to extend the poverty study through the next year. Those present thought that the state of the economy could lead to even more hardship during the next year, resulting in both continued generational poverty and an increase in situational poverty due to increased numbers of people losing their jobs. The study will include how the transportation, housing, health care and education policies affect poverty in Johnson County.

Members suggested other ideas for informational programs. These include how tax money is appropriated and allocated, updating the position on a living wage, updating the mass transit position, impact of foreclosures in Johnson County, impact of the financial crisis, availability of juvenile services and expansion of health care, and how vacancies in offices such as District Attorney are filled.

Janis McMillen reported that the National League is recommending information for an update on health care and a study on National Popular Vote. The local league will address this at the April Meeting. I urge everyone to look at the national website for information and questions on this study. The League has a position on the abolition of the Electoral College, but this will not be feasible for a long while. The National Popular Vote compact is a way to select the President by majority vote in states where a majority of electors agree.

The members present at the January meeting plan to suggest to the State Board that they consider a study for next year on a state energy plan or revising how primary elections are conducted.

Thank you to all who participated. We have had interesting and informative programs the past year, and we can look forward to another year of learning and working together.

Barbara Stillman

LWV Position

The subject for the February 4 Let's Talk Issues program is transportation and the highway system. So this month's local position question will be on the Arterial Road System.

STATEMENT OF POSITION:

The League of Women Voters of Johnson County supports a county-wide arterial road system. The League supports an ongoing engineering survey of major roads in Johnson County to provide an arterial road system which is flexible enough to handle the growing traffic. Such a system should include:

1. Clearly defined administrative responsibilities and adequate financing.
2. A county-assisted road system

Past Study: 1971; Approved: 1994

Membership

To join League, you may download a membership form at www.lwvjoco.org.

*Please select type of membership. Payment at this time covers membership through **July 1, 2009**.*

___ **Individual** \$55*
___ **Sustaining** \$85

___ **Supporting** \$60
___ **Student** \$20 (*requires 1/2 time course enrollment*)

___ **Household** \$75

** \$55 = Local \$9, State \$18, National \$28.*

Mail to: LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF JOHNSON COUNTY
c/o Rita Einspahr, 4217 W. 97th Terrace, Overland Park, KS 66207

Rita Einspahr and Kari Sime

Let's Talk Issues

The Let's Talk Issues dates are February 4, March 4 and April 8. The topic for February is transportation and the highway system. The topic for March is poverty in Johnson County and the April topic will be a wrap-up of the legislative session.

Judicial Selection Process

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has selected Neil Foth to be the next District Court Judge in Johnson County. He will fill the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge John Anderson III. Neil's primary practice area has been as a plaintiff's attorney handling cases involving personal injury, worker compensation and legal malpractice.

Janis McMillen
member of the 10th District Judicial Nominating Commission

March LWV Meeting

The program topic for our March 7 general meeting will be "Poverty in Johnson County." Based on the findings of our local league study on poverty in Johnson County, we will break into groups to discuss various facets of this problem.

Ann Arnott

Naturalization Ceremonies

Naturalization Ceremonies are held at the Federal Courthouse in KCK at 5th and State on the last Friday of each month. They begin at 1:30 p.m. and last about 45 minutes. Then we register the new citizens to vote. If anyone is interested in attending this very moving ceremony and helping with voter registration, please contact Bettie Swiontek (booklady@kc.rr.com or 913-362-4918).

Please mark your calendar with dates of upcoming Naturalization Ceremonies.

January 30	Judge John W. Lungstrum
February 27	Chief Judge Kathryn H. Vratil
March 27	Judge Carlos Murguia
April 24	Magistrate Judge David J. Waxse

Bettie Swiontek

League Member to serve on KDOT 5-County Transportation Study

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) is leading a two-phase study of the changing transportation needs in the 5-county area that includes Douglas, Johnson, Leavenworth, Miami and Wyandotte Counties. The study, which was initiated in September 2008, has three goals:

1. Assess the multi-modal transportation needs
2. Prioritize the needs
3. Develop strategies to address the needs

It is hoped that the study will develop recommendations that are technically feasible, politically acceptable and financially realistic -- not an easy task at a time when northeast Kansas is growing rapidly and the economy has been rocked by economic upheaval.

In November, the KDOT invited Elaine Giessel, as a representative of the League, to assist with the study on a Stakeholder Advisory Panel. During 2009, in Phase 1 of the study, this panel is to assist in evaluating needs, identifying community values, developing a long-range transportation vision and establishing criteria that will guide future priority setting (Goal 1). Phase 2 will involve developing a prioritized plan with strategies and potential projects (Goals 2 and 3), but it has not yet been funded.

Giessel attended a day-long Transportation Summit on December 17 in Kansas City, KS. KDOT Secretary Deb Miller, who introduced the 5-County project, was followed by local and national planning and transportation experts. Presentations, discussions and interactive exercises helped a broad range of interested parties to identify and to think creatively about solving the region's transportation issues.

A number of key issues were identified in Johnson County, including the proposed intermodal facility in Gardner and possible freight travel between Grandview, MO and Gardner. Interest in reducing congestion and in providing more efficient east-west travel between Kansas and Missouri was also expressed.

The Stakeholder Advisory Panel will hold its first meeting Tuesday, January 27 from 8:30-10 a.m.

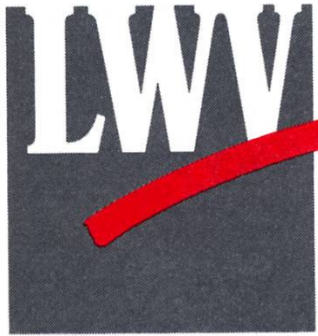
Making Democracy Work Award

The League of Women Voters is pleased to invite you to nominate an outstanding community leader for our annual Making Democracy Work Award. The League celebrates leaders who have envisioned a way to improve our community and who have mobilized others to work collaboratively to affect positive change. The Making Democracy Work Award will honor one such individual who has, in the League tradition, helped make our local governments strong, vibrant, fair and responsive to the needs of all members of our community.

Nominations are open to any individual who has been a vital part of the work force and who has contributed to our community in a meaningful way. Nominees may be nominated by a friend or colleague, or the nominees can apply themselves. **The deadline for nominations is February 1, 2009; please note that nominations must include an essay about the nominee.**

The winner will be presented at our Johnson County League of Women Voters Annual Meeting on May 9, 2009. Please note that the winner must be available to receive the award on May 9. We believe there is no greater tribute that we can make than to honor a leader who continues to demonstrate commitment, leadership and a passion for civic improvement.

Ann Sanders



Making Democracy Work

Nomination Form

Nominator (Please print) _____

Signature _____

Phone number () _____ Email _____

Date _____

~~~~~

Nominee (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

~~~~~

In a sentence, explain why you are nominating this person. _____

What is your relationship to the nominee? _____

Please attach an essay of not more than 250 words telling how he or she fits the following criteria for this award:

- *Has served the public sector or the community for at least five years.*
- *Has exhibited honesty and integrity.*
- *Has made a difference in the community.*
- *Has kept promises made to others or the community.*
- *Has proven she/he is a highly principled individual.*
- *Has demonstrated leadership in effecting positive change.*
- *Will be available to attend award ceremony on May 9, 2009.*

Please return this form and your essay by February 1, 2009 to: The VOTER, PO Box 13491, Overland Park, KS 66282

Primary Election - March 3, 2009

General Election - April 7, 2009

Election of Officials in the following cities

- Bonner Springs - Mayor - 2 Year Term, Council Member Ward 4 - 4 Year Term
- De Soto - Mayor - 4 Year Term, 2 Council Members At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Edgerton - Mayor - 4 Year Term, 2 Council Members At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Fairway - Mayor - 4 Year Term, Council Members Wards 1, 2, 3, 4 - 4 Year Term
- Gardner - Mayor - 4 Year Term, 2 Council Members At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Lake Quivira - Mayor - 2 Year Term, 2 Council Members At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Lenexa - Council Members Wards 1, 2, 3, 4 - 4 Year Term
- Merriam - Mayor - 4 Year Term, Council Members Wards 1, 2, 3, 4 - 4 Year Term
- Mission Hills - Mayor - 4 Year Term, 2 Council Members At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Mission Woods - Mayor - 2 Year Term, 5 Council Members At-Large - 2 Year Term
- Olathe - 1 Council Member At-Large - 4 Year Term, Council Members Wards 3, 4 - 4 Year Term
- Overland Park - Mayor - 4 Year Term, Council Members Wards 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- Roeland Park - Mayor - 4 Year Term, Council Members Wards 1, 2, 3, 4 - 4 Year Term
- Spring Hill - Mayor - 4 Year Term, 2 Council Members At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Westwood Hills - Mayor - 2 Year Term, 5 Council Members At-Large - 2 Year Term

City Candidates file at their respective city halls

Election of Board Positions for:

- USD 229 Blue Valley Board Members - Positions 4, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- USD 230 Spring Hill Board Members - Positions 4, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- USD 231 Gardner Edgerton Board Members - Positions 4, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- USD 232 De Soto Board Members - Positions 4, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- USD 233 Olathe Board Members - Positions 3, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- USD 289 Wellsville Board Members - Positions 4, 5, 6 - 4 Year Term
- USD 491 Eudora Board Members - 3 At-Large Positions - 4 Year Term
- USD 512 Shawnee Mission Board Members - Positions 2, 4, 6 At-Large - 4 Year Term
- Johnson County Community College Trustees - 3 At-Large Positions - 4 Year Term
- Water District #1 of Johnson County - Positions 3, 4, 5 - 4 Year Term

The above offices file at the Johnson County Election Office. Exceptions: USD 289 candidates file at the Franklin County Clerk's Office and USD 491 candidates file at the Douglas County Clerk's Office.

January 27 (12 Noon): Filing and Withdrawal Deadline

OBSERVER CORP REPORTS

Learn about your community and help League prepare for action

Observer Corp is vital for keeping our membership informed on local issues. Observers are needed for:

- Blue Valley School Board: Meetings held on the 2nd Monday at 7 p.m. at the Blue Valley District Administration Office, 151st & Metcalf
- Olathe School Board: Meetings held on the 1st Thursday, 5:30 p.m. at 14160 Black Bob
- Johnson County Airport Commission meets the fourth Wednesday at 9 a.m. at 1 New Century Parkway, New Century, Kansas (near Gardner)
- Johnson County Water Board meets the second Tuesday at 7 p.m. at 10747 Renner Blvd, Lenexa
To volunteer as an Observer, please contact Marian Wade (362-7587 or fwade@kc.rr.com).

Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees

Dec. 11 meeting: The Trustees conducted routine business, including approval of agenda items presented by various committees.

A major announcement at the meeting was the donation of nearly six acres of land on the campus of the Olathe Medical Center, intended to be the site for a new Johnson County Community College health services educational center. A letter of intent was signed last week by representatives from the college and the hospital regarding development of the center. The degree and certificate programs that may be offered include licensed practical nursing, home health aide, physical therapy assistant, radiological technician assistant, dietitian and medical office assistant.

Submitted by Ann Arnott

Overland Park Planning Commission

December meeting

*After the approval of the October minutes, the nominating committee presented the slate of candidates for Commission officers for this year. Chair Ms. Sorenson, and Vice-Chair Collins were reelected to their respective offices.

*Eighty-one acres in the vicinity of SW corner of 175 Street and Pflumm Rd. was rezoned from RUR-J (rural) to CP-2, Planned General Business District, RP-4 Planned Cluster Dwelling District, and RP-5 Planned Apartment House District to allow commercial and multi-family development. This area is close to a school and could be a problem piece of property to develop given the gas line easement through the property from north to south. Four different pipeline companies with 10 different pipelines go through the easement. The different uses have been laid out with a green area over the gas line easement. The business areas allow for plenty of parking yet the developer emphasized the walkability of the area. A number of related issues were discussed, including the nearby park, other unincorporated land, the Church of the Harvest to the west of this land, and further development along 175 St. The Commission passed this item.

*A Sonic restaurant is planned for the NW corner of 121 St. and Metcalf. After a discussion of the layout and building exterior, the item passed.

There were few items for the Commission to act on. Many were continued into the next year and two were withdrawn. No doubt the economic downturn has affected the level of developer activity.

Submitted by Betty Wyckoff

Recent U.S. Senate Votes

[Cloture Motion; Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009](#) - Vote **Passed** (66-12, 20 Not Voting) The Senate reached the necessary sixty votes to move forward on this bill, which is a package of over 160 bills related to public lands, national parks, and water development legislation.

Sen. Sam Brownback voted **NO** **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **Not Voting**

[Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009](#) - Vote **Passed** (73-21, 4 Not Voting) The Senate passed this bill, which is a package of over 160 bills related to public lands, national parks, and water development legislation.

Sen. Sam Brownback voted **NO** **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **NO**

[Cloture Motion; Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009](#) - Vote **Agreed to** (72-23, 3 Not Voting) The Senate garnered the necessary 60 votes to start debate on this employee pay discrimination bill.

Sen. Sam Brownback voted **NO** **Sen. Pat Roberts** voted **NO**

Recent U.S. House Votes

[Paycheck Fairness Act](#) - Vote **Passed** (256-163, 14 Not Voting) The House passed this bill to allow gender-based pay discrimination victims to sue for more money and require employers to meet a higher standard to justify pay disparities.

Rep. Dennis Moore voted **YES**

[Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009](#) - Vote **Passed** (247-171, 15 Not Voting) The House passed this employee pay discrimination measure that would allow courts to consider each new paycheck as a new instance of discrimination.

Rep. Dennis Moore voted **YES**

[Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009](#) - Vote **Passed** (289-139, 6 Not Voting) The House passed this bill to expand the Children's Health Insurance Program to cover an estimated total of 11 million children.

Rep. Dennis Moore voted **YES**

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF JOHNSON COUNTY
9531 MEADOW LANE
LEAWOOD KS 66206**

Upcoming Events

Thursday January 22	Roe v. Wade Day , sponsored by Kansas Choice Alliance; Dillon House, 404 SW 9th Street Topeka, KS Registration: 9 a.m.
Friday January 30	Naturalization Ceremony: Register new voters; 1:30 p.m.; Federal Courthouse, 5 th and State, Kansas City, Kansas; Judge John W. Lungstrum presiding
Wednesday February 4	Let's Talk Issues: Transportation and the highway system; Johnson County Community College
Saturday February 7	General Meeting: Topic: "Climate Change Hits Home: Challenges and Solutions for Kansas" 8:30 a.m. refreshments, 9-11 a.m. program, 11 a.m. board meeting; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS
Wednesday March 4	Let's Talk Issues: Poverty in Johnson County; Johnson County Community College
Saturday March 7	General Meeting: Topic: "Poverty in Johnson County" 8:30 a.m. refreshments, 9-11 a.m. program, 11 a.m. board meeting; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS
Thursday March 19	LWV Day at the Capitol , First Presbyterian Church, Topeka 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Deadline for the March 2009 issue is February 10.