



## Calendar

Feb 11	Public Forum Wednesday 6:30 pm Emporia Public Library	“Electoral College, The Good and the Bad” Kay Calvert presenter. Open to the Public. Please bring anyone interested.
Feb 14	Eggs & Issues 8 am Presbyterian Manor	State Representatives & Senator will speak and answer questions. Everyone is welcome, hosted by Emporia Chamber of Commerce and LWVE. Coffee and rolls served 8am to 8:30.
Feb 23	Board Meeting Monday, 7pm Havenhill Residence	Board Meeting, everyone is invited to attend
March 3	Tuesday	Primary election
March 11	Public Forum Wednesday 6:30 pm Emporia Public Library	“A Proposal for a National Popular Vote” Open to the Public. Please bring anyone interested.
March 14	Eggs & Issues 8 am Flint Hills Technical College	State Representatives & Senator will speak and answer questions. Everyone is welcome, hosted by Emporia Chamber of Commerce and LWVE. Coffee and rolls served 8am to 8:30.
March 18	Wednesday	Advance Voting Begins. Senior Care Center Voting will be scheduled March 23-April 3 <sup>rd</sup> .
March 18	Board Meeting Monday, 7pm Havenhill Residence	Board Meeting, everyone is invited to attend
March 19	Thursday	League Day at the Capitol.
March 25	Wednesday 5:30 pm Salad Supper 6:30 pm Meeting Emporia Public Library	LWVE Annual Meeting at the Emporia Public Library. Please bring a salad. We will have bread, drinks, dessert and tableware on hand.

*League of Women Voters, a non-partisan 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.*

**Information on the Kansas League of Women Voters can be found at <http://lwvk.org>  
The National League of Women Voters is at [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)**

### **President's Paragraph:**

January has flown by – but so glad we have not had the terrible weather some of the nation has.

The legislature has started their sessions and we have had our first Eggs & Issues. Senator Barnett and Representatives Mast and Hill supplied us with many answers as we had a very good crowd with many question. Thank you to Teresa Walters for being moderator and Ann Havenhill for making coffee pot after coffee pot on a cold morning.

“Lunch with League” was a pleasant change to getting out at night in the cold. We were even participants in the fire alarm due to a breaker overheating at the library. Thank you to Ann Havenhill, Joan Hummel, Judy Wild, Betty Campbell and Margaret Davidson for helping organize and accomplishing these lunches.

League at the Capital will be on March 9th – please put this date on your calendar. We will be getting our car pooling together.

Please put February 11<sup>th</sup>, on your calendar – Kay Calvert will be the presenter of “How We Elect Our President – The Electoral College, The Good and The Bad” at 6:30 pm at the Emporia Public Library. On March 11<sup>th</sup> we will host a presentation of “A Proposal for a National Popular Vote”. We are sponsoring these two public forums on how we elect our Presidents and various proposals to change how we elect our Presidents. Please spread the word and extend an invitation to anyone who is interested.

*—by Diana Solis*

### **January 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting – The Role of the County Clerk, Especially Concerning Senior Voting & LWVE**

On January 14<sup>th</sup>, “Lunch with The League of Women Voters” was held at the Emporia Public Library with approximately 25 attending. Present were Karen Hartenbower, retiring Lyon County Clerk, and Tammy Vopat, new Lyon County Clerk, speaking and answering questions about the County Clerk’s office and Senior Housing Voting. Everyone believed Senior Housing Voting to be a very worthwhile and fulfilling project for all sides – the Seniors, the County Clerk plus her office and The League of Women Voters of Emporia. This is a project we plan to continue to broaden and help make voting available to all.

To warm us up, we had two various types of soups, subway sandwiches and cookies for lunch.

*--by Joan Hummel*

### **January 24<sup>th</sup> – Eggs & Issues**

On January 24<sup>th</sup>, Eggs and Issues was hosted by LWVE and the Chamber of Commerce at the Emporia Recreation Center. Approximately 70 people attended asking questions about how budget was going to be met, cuts to schools, wind, energy, and coal. Teresa Walters was the moderator with Senator Barnett, Representatives Mast and Hill forming the panel. League furnished the coffee and hot tea. The next Eggs & Issues will be February 14<sup>th</sup> at Presbyterian Manor at 8: 00 am with Senator Barnett and Representative Mast and Hill.

*--by Jesse Solis*

### **January 28<sup>th</sup> – Meeting with speaker Lyon County Controller**

The Second "Lunch with League" was held on January 28<sup>th</sup> at the Emporia Public Library. Lyon County Controller, Dan Slater, attended and spoke on the duties of the office and answered questions ranging from tax appraisals, property taxes, and the proposed Lyon County Sales Tax. We had twelve members attend who appreciated the information he had to share with us. We had started the meeting with lunch of pizza from Wheat State, picked up by Betty Campbell and Margaret Davidson, fruit, coffee and tea prepared by Ann Haverhill and Joan Hummel. Thank you for all of the help ladies.

--by *Diana Solis*

### **New Member – Tammy Vopat**

Our newest League member is Tammy Vopat. Tammy has taken over as County Clerk succeeding league member Karen Hartenbower. She is excited to be working with the League on elections in Lyon County. She jumped right in and set up the election machines for us at the High School Voting event at Emporia High School. Tammy worked in the County Appraisers Office for 7years. She was raised in Emporia. She and her husband have 2 boys, 3 grandchildren and a dog.

Add Tammy to your Directory -- 2036 E. 6th Ave., Emporia 66801 342-6730 [lyclerk@lyoncounty.org](mailto:lyclerk@lyoncounty.org)

--by *Ann Haverhill*

### **February 11<sup>th</sup> – "How We Elect Our President – The Electoral College, the Good and The Bad**

Did you know that:

The President of the United States is NOT elected by popular vote?

At least three Presidents have been elected without either a majority or plurality of the popular vote.

Who and What is the Electoral College?

The League of Women Voters of Emporia is sponsoring two public forums on how we elect our President and various proposals to change how we elect our President.

### **HOW WE ELECT OUR PRESIDENT – THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE, THE GOOD AND THE BAD**

When: February 11, 2009 – 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Where: Emporia Public Library

### **A PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE**

When: March 11, 2009 – 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Where: Emporia Public Library

### **March 19<sup>th</sup> – League Day at the Capitol**

League Day at the Capitol will be Thursday, March 19, 8:30-1:30. We'll convene in Willard Hall in the basement of First Presbyterian Church, across from the Capitol in Topeka. Morning speakers will be Alan Conroy, Legislative Research (budget information) and April Holman, Kansas Action for children. Nancy Jackson, Climate and Energy Project of the Land Institute, will be our luncheon speaker.

To be shared with all League members

HAPPY NEW YEAR

## **LWVUS UPDATES**

\***National Popular Vote** study materials are available on the LWVUS website.

Go to the home page ([www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)) and type in National Popular Vote in the little box under "Search." There are Compact Papers with background, supporting and opposing arguments for NPV as well as consensus questions. An electronic response form will be available later this month.

\***Global Climate Change Background Papers** on the LWVUS website provide informative study material for consideration. Go to the home page and click on Global Climate Change in the column on the left.

\***Sunshine Week** is scheduled for March 15-21. This offers a key opportunity to partner with your local newspaper on a public forum or to educate the public in an op-ed piece on the importance of openness in government. Many citizens are unaware of the Open Meetings and Open Records acts that govern all public bodies, including city council, county commission, and local school boards. Note that the Kansas Press Association is a strong supporter of Sunshine Week.

### LWVK UPDATES

Please mark these dates on your calendar and share with your members.

**January 13 – Kansas Voter deadline** – (or before if possible. Linda Johnson is on a really tight schedule) Include articles about successful voting projects, names of informative speakers and programs, recently deceased members, and anything you judge would be helpful to other Local Leagues. Your local League reports really add interest to the Voter.

**January 22 – Roe v. Wade Day, Dillon House in Topeka.** League members can show strong support of Women's Rights by their attendance. Contact Barbara Holzmark, [bagels@aol.com](mailto:bagels@aol.com), or 913-381-8222 for details.

**January 24 – State Board Meeting** - Let your Board member or me know of any topic you wished to be discussed. Of course, you are always welcome to join us. The more Local League members know about how the State League works, the stronger our entire League is.

**January 31 – Membership Updates** – Your membership updates (adding new members as well as deleting those who have departed) must be submitted to LWVUS. This number will be used to determine your per member payment (PMP) for the state and national League. Since we also use this list for each state League mailing, it is important to keep your membership list current throughout the year so that all members receive all *Voters* and other mailings.

**January 31 – LWVK Education Fund Grant Applications due** – Discuss with your Board and other interested members projects that would educate the public and bring visibility to League. Grant application is in a separate email.

**January 31 – Program Planning** – Submit your League's recommendation to me for the 2009-2011 state study as well as any recommended updates or changes you may have to our current state positions.

**March 18 – Day at the Capitol** – This is the day League members from around the state meet in Topeka to learn about pending legislation and hear speakers address current "hot topics" for both legislative and executive branches. It's a good opportunity to bring a friend along to learn about League's work. April Holman, Kansas Action for Children, and Allan Conroy, Legislative Research, will be discussing the 2009 Kansas budget cuts and priorities in the morning. Nancy Jackson, Climate and Energy Project of the Salina Land Institute, will be the luncheon speaker. A registration form will follow soon. **The LWVK Board will meet in the League office after the luncheon speaker. Guests are welcome.**

**May 2, Convention, Great Bend.**

\*Beginning in January the Climate and Energy Project will be featuring a blog from a representative from each Kansas League. Jean Lee, Manhattan, has made arrangements and will be contacting one of your members. Do

check out their website and blogs at cep.org.

\*Also be thinking about what you would like to add to the LWVK website that would highlight your League.

\*The 2009 Kansas Legislature is about to convene, and we need your help. Janis McMillen, who has edited and so faithfully contributed to E-Reports, is unable to cover issues as she has in the past. Thus, we need some members to volunteer to follow a particular legislative topic and share that information with me for publication in the Legislative E-Reports. Most of work can be done by searching on your very own computer. Paul Johnson, our Legislative Consultant, will again be providing us with vital information about key League issues.

**LEGISLATIVE E-REPORT  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KANSAS**

**Diane Kuhn, President  
Editor**

**Issue No. 2  
January 5, 2009**

---

**ENERGY CHOICES AND QUANDRIES**

The development of energy policy in Kansas is chaotic and manipulative. While the Obama presidency will prioritize energy efficiency investments and renewable energy development, Kansas's legislators will push ahead with coal plants and give limited support to energy conservation and renewable energy only if the Holcomb coal plants are allowed. The Kansas Corporation Commission will plod along hoping that the major utilities will provide energy efficiency programs but the utilities will not be mandated to provide such cost effective programs. Energy assistance payments will increase with the inflow of more federal dollars.

The Holcomb coal debate will not go away. Sunflower – six western Kansas rural electric cooperatives – is still in debt from building the first Holcomb coal plant in 1979. By managing the construction and operation of two new coal plants for Colorado and New Mexico customers, Sunflower will earn a bonus that will cover some of their existing debt. Sunflower seems prepared to cover unlimited legal fees in their quest to overturn Kansas Department of Health and Environment's (KDH&E) decision to deny the air permits for the two new coal plants. This path is becoming more up hill as federal district courts are now implementing the United States Supreme Court decision that carbon dioxide can be regulated.

Kansas's legislators will try again to find that perfect deal to strip KDH&E of its authority to deny air permits on the basis of carbon dioxide emissions. At present Kansas does not have a 'net metering' policy that allows electric customers a fair payment for their electricity generated by windmills or photovoltaic solar electric panels. Today a customer pays 8-14 cents a kilowatt hour (kwh) from the electric company but only receives 2-3 cents a kwh for renewable power they sell back to the utility. There may be new state tax credits for energy efficiency investments and higher energy efficiency standards mandated for all new public buildings. The new state tax credits for energy conservation would lower revenues to the state and that may be a hard sell given the budgetary shortfalls the state is facing. The new 'net metering' policy and a variety of energy conservation proposals will only be implemented as a trade for Holcomb coal.

The development of wind energy moves forward in Kansas regardless of what happens with the Holcomb decision. In 2007-8, wind farm capacity in Kansas increased from 320 megawatts (MW) to over 1,000 MW. Kansas was second of all 50 states in this expansion of wind energy. (Kansas has 10,000 MW's of installed electrical generation with 70% of that fired by coal.) There are several major wind farm projects in the development phase but there is a shortage of major electric power lines to carry the wind energy from Western Kansas. There is now a battle between Westar and a private firm from Michigan to build new power lines. Large wind farms are now owned by either foreign or out-of-state developers thus denying Kansas the best returns from this renewable energy source. Large wind farms are property tax exempt so county governments or local school districts are getting limited payments from these wind farms. Smaller wind systems – known as community wind – could be developed and owned by local investors as they are in Iowa and Minnesota but Kansas' lawmakers have not promoted such opportunities. This may change this legislative session.

The Kansas Corporation Commission - that regulates 75% of the natural gas and electric sales in Kansas – is slowly issuing orders on their investigations into energy efficiency investments and programs by regulated Kansas' utilities. The KCC has decided they have the general authority to approve efficiency and conservation programs but will not require utilities to implement such programs. The KCC has not compiled a detailed database on the actual cost of energy efficiency investments (insulation, higher efficiency furnaces/air conditioners, compact fluorescent lighting, improved motors, etc.) versus the cost of electricity from new power plants. National studies show that energy efficiency will cost 1-2 cents a saved kwh versus 6-8 cents per kwh from new coal power (not accounting for any environmental cost). The KCC has not mandated that the major utilities compile a detailed 'integrated resource plan' that would list all the options from energy efficiency to new power production to ascertain the most reasonably priced electric or natural gas service. For regulated utility monopolies, these resource plans are crucial to provide the best market investment signals.

Westar – the largest electric company in Kansas serving 570,000 of our 1 million homes – has now developed an energy efficiency department to educate their customers and promote energy conservation investments. This department now has 13 employees and a budget in the \$6-7 million range. This compares to Westar's latest \$300 million investment in two natural gas peaking turbines near Emporia to meet summer air conditioning loads and back-up the variable electric production from two wind farms. Kansas Gas Service - that provides natural gas service to 645,000 homes in Kansas - has shown no interest in developing an energy efficiency division or providing such programs. Midwest Energy - that is based in Hays and serves 90,000 customers - is actively developing the most comprehensive energy conservation programs that involve complete energy audits and funding of cost-effective energy efficiency investments through the utility bill. What is unique to this program is that the payment for these conservation measures are tied to the meter so that rental units can qualify for these programs and the renter can benefit from the conservation savings.

The federal government has now doubled the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) that is administered by the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. LIHEAP – for households with income below 130% of the federal poverty line – has been assisting 40-45,000 households a year with an energy assistance payment close to \$400. SRS estimates that less than 50% of the eligible households participate. The LIHEAP program will begin January 15 and run till the end of March. In the past, much colder temperatures or much higher natural gas prices have not propelled more households to apply. With today's recession, this may be a different story this year. Fifteen percent of the LIHEAP block grant is given over to the Kansas Weatherization Assistance Program. This program works with 7 sub-grantees across the state to weatherize homes. With extra funding from LIHEAP and the U.S. Department of Energy, the number of homes weatherized should increase from 1,250 in 2008 to over 2,000 in 2009. President-elect Obama cited a goal of weatherizing 1 million homes a year for ten years. Kansas' quota of such a goal would be 10,000 homes a year.

In conclusion, the energy debate will not be as center stage as it was last year. Budget cuts will be the primary concern. The new Speaker of the Kansas House – Rep. Mike O'Neal – is not as strong a proponent of Holcomb as former Speaker Melvin Neufeld was. 2009 will experience a serious recession and the availability of capital will be a limiting factor. The new President and his administration take climate change very seriously and so greater reliance on burning coal will be challenged. The new economic stimulus package will have greater funding for weatherizing buildings. Just as the residents of tornado-ravaged Greensburg have benefited by building homes and businesses to high energy efficiency standards, Kansas' lawmakers could benefit the entire state by taking these real world energy efficiency savings in Greensburg and help apply that to the housing stock and commercial buildings statewide. The Governor understands these energy conservation dynamics. The Lt. Governor is leading the charge for expanded wind energy. Hopefully the Kansas Legislature will see the light.

Paul Johnson