



# UPDATE

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos

**League of Women Voters of Los Alamos**

**P. O. Box 158, Los Alamos, NM 87544**

[www.lwvlosalamos.org](http://www.lwvlosalamos.org)

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## ***Calendar***

- October 8 Early voting begins
- October 15 Lunch with a Leader: Shane Woolbright, Mesa Public Library, 11:45 a.m.
- October 22 Board Meeting, Mesa Public Library, noon
- November 5 Election Day
- November 19 Lunch with a Leader: Mesa Public Library, 11:45 a.m.

## ***Lunch with a Leader: Shane Woolbright***

The October 15 Lunch with a Leader in Mesa Library at 11:45 will feature Shane Woolbright. He received his Masters degree in Public Administration from the University of Arkansas. In addition to numerous municipal government accomplishments, he has also served as chair of the Audubon Society of Central Oklahoma and as a member of numerous other environmental groups.

He retired in January 2013 after 30 years as Executive Director/General Manager of the Municipal Electric Systems of Oklahoma. He worked with other statewide municipal trade associations to establish federally recognized

electric utility worker certification programs. In 2012, he was selected by the Oklahoma Municipal Power Authority to receive a special Service Award in recognition of his contributions to public power.

His talk will cover the dangers of global warming that few people have considered. Before his talk he will take a look at our local utility and its generation resources. He will discuss Los Alamos's contributions to pollution and climate change (spoiler alert...it's very large because of all the commuting) and also the climate and economic effects of growth in New Mexico.

*Karyl Ann Armbruster*

## ***Co-President's Message: Losing a True League Hero, Senator Carlos Cisneros***

Barbara and I and many other League members were sad to hear of the recent death of long-time Senator Carlos Cisneros. We knew him as our senator representing White Rock, along with parts of Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, and Taos Counties. He was open, accessible, friendly, and modest. He always had an open door at the legislature, but above all we respected his faithful attendance at our annual legislative previews.

Several League leaders met with him before legislative sessions to discuss issues of concern—he was especially knowledgeable about energy and fiscal policy. His voting record was nearly always in line with League positions, and we consistently learned much from talking with him.

In reading about his life, I was struck by the fact that he had become an orphan at an early age. We had always appreciated his coming the long distance from the tiny town of Questa to visit with us. In Questa, where he lived his whole life, he had been a miner and a union leader, living through the rise and fall of molybdenum mining in his town.

Who will take his place in the Senate? The governor will appoint someone from a list of nominees proposed by the counties in Senate District 6. Since that includes Los Alamos, our County Council will be involved. In response to an email, Chair Sara Scott said,

At this point the state has not provided any guidance regarding the process. So, what we discussed at the last Council meeting is working towards getting our County recommendation ready by the end of October.

The County Manager/staff will publish information regarding the process and timelines in the coming weeks. We anticipate asking for a letter of interest, the candidates to be present at a Council meeting to provide summary statements, and then a vote by Council regarding the recommendation on November 12. The candidate must live in District 6, which includes White Rock, but not Los Alamos.

*Becky Shankland*

## ***Welcome, New Members!***

**Joyce Nickols writes:** I moved to Los Alamos 51 years ago with husband Norris and two children, Michele and Todd. I immediately became active in the Unitarian Church of Los Alamos, served on the Jemez House board and chaired a Los Alamos Arts Council Arts and Craft Fair. I decided I would be home more with my small children if I returned to work. Since I was a registered medical technologist, I was easily hired in the laboratory at the Los Alamos Medical Center. I then was employed by LASL (now LANL), working first in the Occupational Health Division followed by the Health Science Division. After retirement in 1991, I continued my church activities, served as a board member for Self-Help, Inc. (chaired the Empty Bowl & Tools for School Projects). Currently I am a docent at both PEEC and the Los Alamos History Museum.

P. S. Joyce organized National Voter Registration Day at PEEC. LWVLA is grateful for her work.

**Andrea Determan**, a long-time Friend of the League, has now joined. **Helen Carpenter** has also joined. We'll hope to have introductions from both of them in a future newsletter.

## ***National Voter Registration Day Succeeds with 60 New Registrations***

In preparation for September 24, National Voter Registration Day, County Clerk Naomi Maestas and Elections Manager Gloria Maestas held a special training session to update current registrars and train new ones. It was a large turnout with a clear description of the old and new rules for being a registrar.

The Nature Center had asked to have voter registrars present all day. Joyce Nickols organized pairs of registrars, who worked from 10 a.m. till 8 p.m. Many thanks to Terry Beery, Christine Cloyd, Charlotte (Charlie) Sartor, Mark Jones, Rebecca Chaiken, Janet Harris, Karyl Ann Armbruster, Ellen Mills, Lynn Jones, and of course Joyce Nickols.



*PEEC hosts all-day voter registration with Mark Jones and Charlie Sartor. Photo by Joyce Nickols.*



*A voter smiles at the camera outside Starbucks as Lynn Jones and the County Clerks prepare for National Voter Registration Day. Photo by the LA County Clerks.*

Lynn Jones also worked with the County Clerk's office to register voters at Starbucks.

County Clerk Naomi Maestas summarized the day and month: "We had a total of 60 voter registrations received on NVRD; 38 hard copy throughout all locations with 22 registrations at the high school alone, thanks to the efforts of high school teacher Ms.

Ovaska. Throughout the month we received 314 total...it was a great month for registrations for Los Alamos County!"

*Becky Shankland*



*County Clerk Naomi Maestas explains voter registration to Ms. Ovaska's high school students. Photo by the LA County Clerks.*

## ***LAHS Students Form New Club Called iVote***

The League was delighted when they heard that high school students had created their own civic club for youth. We have just voted to have free

League student memberships, so we hope that some will join.

We welcomed iVote members Eleanor Henderson and Nate Turner to our recent League party and asked Eleanor to explain how their group functions. Here's what she wrote.

"iVOTE is a civic activism club at Los Alamos High School started in 2018 to create a more politically aware high school student body! Many of our members are voter registration agents. We have worked with the County Clerk's office to host voter drives at the high school; we've volunteered with local political parties and plan on doing so again; we attend political conferences and leadership summits around the state; and we host various speaker events and public discussions in order to make LAHS a more informed voting population. We feel that young people ought to care about their political impact and do all we can to show them how!"

*Becky Shankland, Eleanor Henderson*

## **Observer Corps Reports**

### **County Council**

#### **September 10**

In this very short meeting the Council's main task was to approve the consent agenda. Of the various items, the most important was the approval to increase the compensation for services by Friedman Recycling in Albuquerque. The Council also approved the County Manager's selection of Anne Laurent as Public Works Director. Laurent formerly served as Director of the Community Development Department.

During open comment period:

- Lillian Peterson of the LAHS EcoClub presented the Council with their petition to

charge for single-use plastic shopping bags, with 60 names gathered in just one hour at LAHS.

- Steve Doorn and Michael DiRosa stood to request a community-wide informational meeting between LANL and LA County Council about pit production in Los Alamos.

*Jody Benson*

#### **September 17**

The meeting was advertised as a joint County Council and Board of Public Utilities meeting. However, those BPU members who were present did not constitute a quorum. Since the meeting was a work session and the County Council did have a quorum, the meeting continued as a Council meeting.

Department of Public Utilities Electric Production staff gave a high-level presentation on:

1. energy generation resource planning,
2. efforts to meet the goal to be a carbon neutral electric provider by 2040,
3. market power volatility, and
4. the decision by PNM to join the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) Energy Imbalance Market (EIM) in coming years.

Since Los Alamos County is within PNM's balancing area and approximately 25 percent of the County's electricity is purchased market power, PNM's decision to join the EIM will affect how DPU does business.

To assist California with increasing amounts of renewable energy, enhancing electric grid stability, and keeping market power costs affordable, CAISO expanded their market in 2014 to other western states through the Energy Imbalance Market. According to [CAISO's EIM](#)

[website](#) it's a "real-time bulk power trading market, the first of its kind in the western United States."

DPU staff is getting up to speed to learn how the EIM will affect Los Alamos when PNM joins. Specifically, how can the DPU take advantage of the cost savings associated with excess renewable solar energy on the western grid during the day, while at the same time being aware of spiking market prices in the evening when demand for power peaks and solar power is coming off-line?

Also on the agenda for the September 17<sup>th</sup> Council meeting was a presentation by BPU Chair Carrie Walker on BPU and DPU activities over the past year and what to expect for FY 2020. Her overview of FY 2019 included challenges with utility billing related to the Tyler Munis Enterprise Resource Planning implementation; the opt-out provision associated with the Advanced Metering Infrastructure program; the drilling of a new drinking water well; and submission of an application to the Quality New Mexico Performance Excellence Program. For FY 2020 she indicated that multi-year rate increases for water and sewer would be considered, an interim agreement on the Department of Energy water contract will be approved, as well as upcoming capital improvement projects such as the replacement White Rock wastewater treatment plant.

*Julie Williams-Hill*

## **September 24**

Among Proclamations, October is "The People's Eco-Challenge Month."

Extended Council discussion occurred after a briefing by Aaron Walker, chair of the Community Development Advisory Board. The Board was created after community complaints concerning the enforcement activities of the

Community Development Department with regard to the nuisance provisions in the County Code, particularly with respect to weeds, brush piles, refuse, rubbish, and inoperable vehicles and the language contained in the current code.

The Board has lost members and it seemed that there have been very divergent opinions on the Board with respect to how the County should enforce the Code because of the disparate issues. Apparently some neighborhoods have had strict enforcement of some violations, yet other neighborhoods have not. The Pajarito Acres/La Senda area was addressed with regard to height of weed enforcement. It was suggested that perhaps the county should have different requirements for different geographical areas, e.g., Pajarito/La Senda vs. the Denver Steel area. After discussion, the County Manager was to look into hiring an outside consultant to assist the Board with the issues that it has faced regarding the code language and what should be proscribed.

*Addie Jacobson*

## **October 1: The Hotel Conference Center Hearing**

On August 27 the County Council had tabled a proposed ordinance for an economic development project with land donated to a private developer (TNJLA) who would build a hotel/conference center. The Council wanted to gather public opinion and hold further discussions about the PPA (Project Participation Agreement) with the developer. On Oct. 1 all councilors voted to move the item from the table.

Chair Scott then announced that the Hilltop House property is under contract. The building will be demolished by the new owner and the hotel will be replaced with mixed use development – office and retail. This information is pertinent to the discussion because many citizens had questioned the need to build a

hotel in a new location when there was one standing empty.

Economic Development Administrator Joan Ahlers noted that over the five weeks since the item was tabled, the county has received questions and held meetings. She said that the cost to the county to build a conference center would be greater than for a private developer due to the need for the county government to adhere to state law. She said the average cost for a county building was about \$411 per square foot (the average of the three most recent projects: the Municipal Building, the Golf Course, and the White Rock Library).

She said there was a 20-foot easement for the Canyon Rim trail, but that the Council had decided it was cost prohibitive and logistically impossible to construct the trail all the way to the Medical Center. Instead, it would head north to Ashley Pond in the vicinity of 15<sup>th</sup> St. There would be a 10-foot-wide sidewalk in front of the site. (Councilor Sheehey noted that in 2017 the county had estimated it would cost \$10 million to build the trail from 15<sup>th</sup> St. to Diamond.) When Councilor Ryti asked Mr. Patel how close he can build to the canyon, he answered that that is up to the engineers.

The meetings since August 27 have resulted in three proposed amendments to the PPA:

1. The word “retail” has been removed in the description of the proposed food and beverage space that would be built at the front of the property.
2. The term during which the developer will contractually be held to continuously operate the conference center will be extended from 10 years to 15 years.
3. The developer will be required to solicit locally, regionally, and nationally an operator

or owner for the food and beverage space.

The developer, Mr. Patel, announced that he intends to build an extended stay Marriott Hotel with 86 rooms. He will build a 6,500 square foot conference center with a 3,500 square foot meeting room that will be able to hold 300 people at round tables or as many as 583 people in a different configuration. The food and beverage building will be 1,800 square feet. The hotel-conference center will offer a minimum of 17 full-time jobs. The decision about the food and drink facility will be discussed with the community. He has been engaged in discussions about parking with the school district, which has a facility and 58 parking spaces on an adjacent property. He hopes to conclude a shared parking agreement with them.

It was estimated that it will cost about \$1.5 to 2 million to build the conference center and about \$400,000 a year to operate it. In response to a question about whether he will follow the Marriott standards for the conference center, Mr. Patel said yes, and sustainability was a goal.

There were several comments from the public in support of the project as planned, noting that it will bring people to town who will visit other businesses and that the county had wanted a conference center for many years.

Most of the public comments were negative. One common theme was that it was unfair for the county to subsidize a private developer when others had not been assisted and would suffer from the new competition. The new owner of the Holiday Inn Express called for an updated study of the need for a new hotel and conference center since the most recent one was two years old.

Sheehey then moved to amend the ordinance and Izraelevitz seconded. Only Maggiore and Ryti voted against the motion. Ryti said that he

wanted more recent information about the impact on existing businesses. Because the ordinance has been amended, there will be a further hearing on October 15.

*Barbara Calef*

## **Board of Public Utilities**

A preliminary discussion about preparing multi-year rate increases for water and sewer utility services took place during the September 18 Board of Public Utilities meeting. The BPU members requested that staff publish a draft ordinance that establishes a water rate increase of 5 percent in November 2019; 4.25 percent in October 2020, and 4 percent in October 2021. BPU also requested a draft ordinance be published that establishes a sewer rate increase of 6 percent in November 2019; 3 percent in October 2020; and 2 percent in October 2021.

DPU has arranged for a documentary on the national condition of water and sewer infrastructure to be aired on PAC 8 for a two-week period. Two public meetings will also be held by DPU staff to discuss the increases with citizens on October 7, at the White Rock Library at 6 pm and on October 10 at the Los Alamos Nature Center at 6 pm.

BPU will hold a public hearing on October 16, 2019 to consider approval of the ordinances. If approved, the ordinances will go the County Council to consider adoption on November 26.

*Julie Williams-Hill*

## **September Lunch with a Leader: County Engineer Eric Martinez**

Eric Martinez oversees the Engineering & Project Management Division within the Public Works

Department. At Lunch with a Leader he described the broad array of his responsibilities. With a staff of ten, he oversees multi-modal transportation and the county's facilities (offices and recreational centers), and participates in local and regional planning, working with the NM Department of Transportation, DOE/NNSA, the lab, and the northern pueblos.

Martinez is guided in his work by the county's adopted plans: Strategic Leadership, Comprehensive Plan, Bicycle Transportation Plan, Pedestrian Transportation Plan, and the design policy for Complete Streets. He reviews new development plans with respect to their impact on stormwater, traffic, and floodplain management.

Much of the talk concerned our roads. Martinez said that the needs outweigh the dollars. However, he has been able to raise considerable funds through grants. Improvements are planned for NM 502, NM 4, and E. Jemez Rd. A second left turn lane will be added to E. Jemez Road at the junction with NM 4 and Bandelier plans to move the parking for Tsankawi away from the highway.

The Diamond Drive rehabilitation, for which the county received \$4 million from the state, is nearly finished. Plans are being made for work on Trinity Drive; they must be approved by the DOT since it is a state road. The construction of the Hill Apartments near the medical center will cause more congestion, but the DOT says that a signal at 35<sup>th</sup> St. is not warranted. So, a "road diet" reducing Trinity to three lanes with a center turning lane between Diamond and Oppenheimer is under consideration. It would make the intersections safer and accommodate bike lanes. The four lanes from Oppenheimer to DP Rd. would be maintained, but landscaped medians and wider sidewalks will be installed between Oppenheimer and 15<sup>th</sup> St.

The county has received two grants totaling about \$4 million for the new Urban Trail, which will run north from the Canyon Rim Trail to the tennis courts and Canyon Rd. and on to the Aquatic Center.

Martinez said that the Canyon Rim Trail will be extended from Smiths to 20<sup>th</sup> St; there is an easement behind the proposed Marriott hotel. However, the trail will probably not be continued farther west because the property behind Timber Ridge belongs to DOE and is very rugged. The county has received a \$2 million grant to build an underpass at the east end of the Canyon Rim Trail and hopes to start construction in the spring.

Martinez noted that the county has a major facilities maintenance fund for renovations and equipment replacement such as the recent work on the heating and cooling system in the library. Currently the four recreation projects – golf course irrigation system, multi-generational pool, ice skating rink, and splash pad – occupy much of his time.

*Barbara Calef*

## **League Enjoys Reminiscences at Party**

Janice Trujillo's spacious house, featuring a spectacular sunset view, was the scene for a delightful party on Tuesday, October 1.

We began with delicious hearty hors d'oeuvres and libations, followed by a preview of the events in 2020 when we will celebrate women's suffrage and the League's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Then we enjoyed hearing about



*Andrea Determan, Ellen Mills, Skip and Hedy Dunn enjoy the party. Photo by Karyl Ann Armbruster.*

our local League's history from former president Hedy Dunn, Judy Machen (she and other LWV members helped begin the first farmers' market in NM), Ann Beyer (a member for 60 years; she talked about the League's being unwelcome in the old days, Aubrey Dunn having referred to us as "the plague of women voters"), and Allene Lindstrom (she felt she should drop her membership when she was elected to County Council).

We were a friendly group of about 25. It was especially pleasing to welcome two members of the new high school group called iVote, led by Eleanor Henderson.

We had invited some former members who were unable to come: Elizabeth Allred, Betty Lou Lebeda, Renate Zinn, Kay Reiswig, Donna Herbst, Janet Hall. We hope some of them will be able to come to a 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party that's in the planning stages.

*Becky Shankland*



*Allene Lindstrom shows a memorable item from her days as County Councilor. Photo by Karyl Ann Armbruster.*



*Ann Beyer (center) shares stories from the early days of League lobbying at the Roundhouse. Judy Machen, Joyce Nickols, Jody Benson, Janice Trujillo, Don Machen, and Barbara Calef look on. Photo by Karyl Ann Armbruster.*

## **LWVLA Board of Directors 2019-2020**

### Officers:

- Co-presidents: Barbara Calef and Rebecca Shankland
- 1st Vice-President: Ellen Mills
- 2nd Vice-President: Leslie Wallstrom
- Treasurer: Kathleen Taylor
- Secretary: Rebecca Chaiken

### Directors:

- Reservations: Amy Birnbaum
- Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster
- Voter Services: Lynn Jones
- Board of Public Utilities Observer: Julie Williams-Hill

- Publicity: Jody Benson
- Director at Large: Akkana Peck
- Fundraising: Rosmarie Frederickson

### Off-board Directors:

- Arrangements: Wendy Swanson
- Membership: Rebecca Shankland
- Webmaster: Julie Williams-Hill
- County Council Observer: LWVLA Board
- Newsletter Editor: JoAnn Lysne
- Nominating Committee Chair: Ellen Mills
- 2nd Nominating Committee Member: *not filled*

If you would like to join the League, fill out and submit the membership form on page 10.



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LOS ALAMOS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Mail to: LWV Los Alamos  
P.O. Box 158  
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s): \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Check here to receive our local newsletter Update as an electronic file, saving us postage

\_\_\_\_\_ OR Check here if you prefer the newsletter mailed in hard copy.

\_\_\_\_\_ Check here to receive occasional friendly reminders of upcoming events by e-mail.

**Membership Categories: all checks for memberships and contributions should be payable to LWV-Los Alamos and all are now tax-deductible. Let us know if you'd like a tax-deductible statement.**

\_\_\_\_\_ Single membership: \$45

\_\_\_\_\_ Household membership (two+ people at the same address): \$65

\_\_\_\_\_ Single Sustaining membership: \$75

\_\_\_\_\_ Household Sustaining membership (two+ people at the same address): \$95

\_\_\_\_\_ Student membership: \$0 (must be 16 or over)

\_\_\_\_\_ Contribution to support League work: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### **Interests and Ways to Help the League** (check as many as apply)

#### Topics of Interest

- \_\_\_\_\_ Affordable Housing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Local Government
- \_\_\_\_\_ Education
- \_\_\_\_\_ Elections, Voting Rights
- \_\_\_\_\_ Water Issues
- \_\_\_\_\_ Land Use
- \_\_\_\_\_ Health Care
- \_\_\_\_\_ Money in Politics
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sustainability
- \_\_\_\_\_ Living Wage
- \_\_\_\_\_ Public Transportation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Environment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other topics (please suggest):  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Ways to Help with League Activities

- \_\_\_\_\_ Set up Refreshments at Forums
- \_\_\_\_\_ Observer Corps (County Council, DPU, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Nominating Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Voter Guides Committee
- \_\_\_\_\_ Voter Registration
- \_\_\_\_\_ Publicity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Website, Social Media
- \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter
- \_\_\_\_\_ Membership
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fund-raising
- \_\_\_\_\_ Budget Committee for LWV
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lunch with a Leader (assistance)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Fund-raising Committee for LWV
- \_\_\_\_\_ Participate in board meetings or join board

***The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy***

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