



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

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Calendar

September 14	County Clerk mails absentee voter applications to registered voters
September 15	vote411.org Goes Live!
September 15	Lunch with a Leader, Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage, Zoom, 11:45 a.m.
September 22	Board Meeting, Zoom, noon
October 1	Candidate Forum, Zoom, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
October 1	LWVLA Voter Guide arrives at your home in the <i>LADP</i>
October 5	2 nd Candidate Forum, Zoom, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
October 6	Absentee in-person voting begins, Council Chambers, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Lunch with a Leader: Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage

Our next Zoom Lunch with a Leader at 11:45 a.m. on September 15 will feature Bobbi Merryman, a nuclear engineer pursuing her PhD at the University of New Mexico. Bobbi is an Advocacy Officer for the American Nuclear Society and will discuss the safety of Spent Nuclear Fuel Storage (SNF) installations in NM and TX for receipt of SNF from 99 US operating commercial nuclear power reactors and decommissioned US nuclear facilities.

On October 20 at 11:45 a.m. Liddie Martinez will be our leader by Zoom. Martinez was recently appointed to the NM Economic Recovery Council by Governor Lujan Grisham to plan for recovery from the pandemic. She is also the Los Alamos Market President of Enterprise Bank and Trust. AND she is a regular monthly food column contributor to the *Los Alamos Daily Post*. Martinez has completed a cookbook of NM recipes. There will be a little of each of her endeavors in her presentation and plenty of time for those zooming in to ask questions.

Karyl Ann Armbruster

Co-President's Message: How to Celebrate the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos?

At 100 years for the League of Women Voters of the United States and 73 years for the League of Women Voters of Los Alamos, lots of celebrations are in order.

We got a good start on both before the pandemic called an abrupt halt: LWVLA had an enthusiastic turnout for the 2019 summer rodeo parade with banners, suffragist outfits, and a few suffragents. For our 73 years in Los Alamos, the County Council issued a February 2020 proclamation acknowledging our help in creating Los Alamos County government, and organizing candidate forums, voter guides, and civic forums.

As part of LWVNM, we turned out at the Roundhouse in early 2020 to honor 100 years of women's suffrage, with proclamations from the Senate, House, and Governor Lujan Grisham.

Then Covid-19 intervened. Even our planned library gallery exhibit was put on hold, where it remains. You can enjoy a preview of the contents by reading the two articles JJ Mortensen published in the *LA Daily Post* and the *Los Alamos Reporter* <https://ladailypost.com/womens-long-battle-for-the-vote/> and <https://losalamosreporter.com/2020/08/18/national-womens-suffrage-month-womens-long-battle-for-the-vote/> and <https://ladailypost.com/league-of-women-voters-marks-100-years-of-accomplishments/> and <https://losalamosreporter.com/2020/08/26/league-of-women-voters-celebrates-100-years-of-accomplishments/>.



Hedy Dunn and Addie Jacobson dressed in the garb of 1920 suffragists. Photo by Becky Shankland.

When the library reopens, we'll be ready for our virtual plans to become reality. We'll have two suffragists in period costume, Alice Paul in her prison cell, League correspondence with early managers of the Atomic Energy Commission, the first League newsletter from 1947 (remember purple mimeograph?), anecdotes about Abigail Adams, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Nina Otero Warren, and others known and unknown. You'll find the answers to mysterious questions like

- What did a cemetery have to do with the first election in Los Alamos?
- Why did the *New Mexican* print a story titled "League Adds Toilet"?
- Why did League members offer up "blood money"?

The League has always added a spark of humor to its work, though probably not often enough. In the first annual meeting, they wrote a skit including the words:

When you get into politics there is so much to do
You'll never have a moment for pie or stew.

Since parades and gatherings are now taboo, our 2020 celebration has been taken to White Rock's famous rock, which we've had to paint twice—it's a busy platform for birthdays. But we managed to proclaim our message with League members wearing costumes ranging from suffragist outfits to painting outfits (as Bonnie Gordon noted in the *Daily Post*).

We're hoping for lots more selfies on the comic, dress-up, or serious side. Who's for prison?

flags? 20's outfits? signs? hats? masks? Keep up the League tradition of enlightened amusement.

[After you take a selfie (not at the White Rock rock, which has returned to individual birthdays), send your photo to webmaster Julie Williams-Hill: [Julie\(AT\)hillroblestribes\(DOT\)com](mailto:Julie(AT)hillroblestribes(DOT)com). She'll post them for us to enjoy.

If anyone would like a sash to wear, I have six made by Hedy Dunn that can be borrowed—just let me know and I'll leave them on my doorstep for you. Ellen Mills also has some.)

Becky Shankland



Six women's suffrage rock-painters: Barbara Calef, Addie Jacobson, Cas Mason, Becky Shankland, Tom Shankland, Marilyn Doolen. Photo by Rod Mason.

Observer Corps Reports

(All of the meetings are now being conducted virtually.)

County Council

August 4

The Health Service Gap Analysis was the main part of the County Council meeting, and was presented primarily by Tracy Kulik of Kulik Strategic Advisors. The focus of the study was to determine the current situation, identify unmet needs or gaps, review projections and suggest how to collaborate with other entities to fill the gaps.

The study lasted over three months due to COVID constraints and included 8 – 10 participants. The goal is to build capacity in the county over the next five years. A resource inventory was compiled to identify obvious gaps. This also included a literature review of prior studies.

The study covered demography, social economics, disease information, and outreach to the neighboring counties of Rio Arriba, Sandoval, and Santa Fe.

Overall, Los Alamos County has a very healthy population, including the senior residents. Councilor Maggiore asked why 1, 3, 5 years of data was collected. Kulik responded that year 1 is review and implementation, year 3 reviews population growth and housing issues, and year 5 reviews disease impact.

The county's demographics is gender-balanced, including the teen population and the 65+ population, but may change with the projected

increase as the laboratory hires more employees. The study revealed that some teens feel the stress due to expectations of earning advanced degrees, particularly Ph.Ds. Teens are receiving some focus and support through the Los Alamos Public Schools.

The growing senior population puts a strain on the medical and social services available. There is also a high percentage of veterans in Los Alamos County. Women 75 years and older often do not have much family in the county and fall into poverty. Councilor Martin asked why the 75+ year-olds were part of the poverty group. Kulik explained that it is challenging physically and financially to keep up with the increasing cost of living and managing large homes on a fixed pension. Hoarding in this age group is more prevalent, she noted.

Currently 13% of the county population is at or below the national poverty level. Teachers and service workers fall into this category and are classified as the working poor. This is connected to housing that costs more than 30% of overall income, and the cost of medical insurance. The number of individuals receiving SNAP benefits has increased. The near poor individuals may not be aware of support services, and there may be a stigma associated with accessing support services.

There is a group of people who are uninsured, and a group whose insurance is not accepted by local facilities. This latter group includes post-docs who are in the community only for a few years. Kulik reported that there is a group of residents who have not seen a doctor in over a year, and also are not accessing mental health care when needed.

The increase in fast food facilities in the county is associated with the increase in obesity rates. There is a high occurrence of breast cancer,

cervical cancer, and prostate cancer. There are also mental health and substance abuse concerns with a high overdose rate in the county. There is a group of grandparents raising grandchildren, largely due to parental substance abuse and/or incarceration.

The LGBTQ adult population has expressed concerns about their safety and has reported bullying.

Chair Scott said the report was a good starting place for the county to identify needs and determine remedies for gaps in services.

Burgess reported 20 cases of COVID in the county as of August 4. The grant to support COVID-impacted services including child care, housing, and businesses has been filed.

During the public comment period Carrie Fanning, the Executive Director of Family Strengths Network (FSN), said she was looking forward to the results of the GAP analysis and stated that FSN is part of the support provided to Los Alamos County. Grandparents raising grandchildren have extensive relationships to social services, and Ms. Fanning appealed to the Council for continuing support from the County.

Ellen Mills

August 18

Leslie Linke, Chair of the Historic Preservation Advisory Board (HPAB), presented a report about the duties and accomplishments of the HPAB. Their most important task is to renovate the Bathtub Row house once occupied by Oppenheimer, which was recently donated to the County. They must also ensure that the JFK Memorial will be placed on the new Broadcast Booth in Sullivan Field. Several of the long serving board members will have to retire soon.

The councilors thanked Leslie Linke and all the other members coming off the board for their service.

Next, Paul Andrus introduced Amy Bell and another planner, consultants with the State Urban Planning Commission. In their presentation, they explained why the Longview Drive area in White Rock would benefit from designation as a Metropolitan Redevelopment Area (MRA). Having this designation might help to raise interest among developers.

The next item on the agenda was consideration of the path forward for family resource support and parent education services. This was a continuation of the earlier discussion. Councilor Scott reminded the Council of the reason for the discussion. Family Strengths Network and Las Cumbres had both applied for the contract and the County awarded the contract to Las Cumbres. There was so much public support for Family Strengths Network that the County decided to wait to award the contract until the gap analysis study was completed. In response to this analysis, a two-tier service model was presented by Linda Matteson, the Interim Director of Community Services:

Tier One could provide family resource and support via Peer to Peer programming to assist families in providing for a range of needs.

Tier Two could provide intervention treatments, giving parent/caregiver support through evidence-based programs. It could evaluate school-age children for developmental delays and design individual programs for mediation. (The necessity of this goal was questioned by several of the councilors, who said the schools already provide this service). A goal for direct services to families and children who do not qualify for state-funded programs was proposed.

Matteson reported that there is \$124,000 in the budget for the services outlined in Tiers One and Two. If both tiers are desired, more funds would be needed. There were many comments from the Council. They suggested that if they want both tiers, then another \$124,000 should be allocated. Councilors Izraelevitz and Chair Scott felt that this issue should be studied and the long term be considered. Harry Burgess proposed that a one-year contract with possible renewals might be the solution. No vote was taken.

Harry Burgess requested the approval of Cory Styron as Director of Community Services. The motion for approval passed unanimously.

Rosmarie Frederickson

August 25

Los Alamos County Council voted five to two at the August 25th Council meeting to continue on to the next phase of the Carbon Free Power Project (CFPP). Vice Chair Randall Ryti and Councilor Antonio Maggiore voted against moving forward due to concerns related to investing in first-of a-kind technology and skepticism that Department of Energy would honor cost-sharing agreements. The CFPP is a proposed project to construct a nuclear electric generating facility at Idaho National Laboratory using small modular reactor technology. Los Alamos County has subscribed to 11.2 megawatts from the planned 720-megawatt facility with a \$55 per megawatt hour target price.

With the Council's approval, the County commits to paying \$1,046,849, after the Department of Energy and NuScale cost sharing has been applied, to prepare the Combined Operating License Application (COLA). Prior to submitting the COLA in May 2023, and prior to construction in December 2025, Los Alamos will

have two additional off-ramp opportunities. The facility is slated to be operational in 2030.

Julie Williams-Hill

Board of Public Utilities

At the August 19 Board of Public Utilities meeting the main items on the agenda were a presentation from Utilicast consulting firm on the effects the Western Energy Imbalance Market will have on Los Alamos County, and a decision on whether the county should continue to the next phase of the Carbon Free Power Project.

With the approval from the Public Regulation Commission for PNM to join California's Western Energy Imbalance Market (EIM) on April 1, 2021, the Department of Public Utilities staff hired the consulting firm, Utilitcast, to assess how this decision will impact Los Alamos County.

What is the EIM? With the increase of renewable energy resources, the Western Energy Imbalance Market (EIM) was launched to balance fluctuations in electric "supply and demand by finding lower-cost resources to meet real-time power needs," according to the CAISO (California Independent Systems Operator) website, "Western Energy Imbalance Market," <https://www.westerneim.com/Pages/About/HowItWorks.aspx>.

Because the Los Alamos County electric load falls under PNM's balancing authority, the county will automatically be a non-participating resource member when PNM joins in April 2021. To identify opportunities and avoid negative financial impacts to the county, Utilicast reported to the BPU that Los Alamos should hire consultants to help transition to this new EIM business model. They estimate this will cost DPU approximately \$100,000. DPU should also hire a

new fulltime employee and purchase software, estimated at \$8,000 for the initial set up, plus an additional \$6,000 a year. DPU staff will return to the BPU in September with recommendations on how to move forward.

Board members also voted three to five in favor of continuing to the next phase of the carbon free power project. Board Chair Carrie Walker and Board member Steve Tobin voted against moving forward and expressed a preference for projects to be built in New Mexico to benefit New Mexicans. The CFPP is a proposed project to construct a nuclear electric generating facility at Idaho National Laboratory using small modular reactor technology. Los Alamos County has subscribed to 11.2 megawatts from the planned 720-megawatt facility with a \$55 per megawatt hour target price.

Julie Williams-Hill

August Lunch with a Leader: A Public Bank for New Mexico

Three members of the Alliance for Local Economic Prosperity (AFLEP) spoke at LWL about their vision of a public bank for the state of New Mexico. Elaine Sullivan, Chair of the AFLEP Board of Directors, described the organization as “a think tank with an action orientation.” She said the global banking system is broken. A public bank would enhance the local economy by enabling budding entrepreneurs to secure loans to realize their plans. They would apply to a credit union or community bank, which would partner with the public bank to provide the funds, excluding Wall Street from the picture.

The bank would accept no individual accounts; only public funds (from taxes, fees, etc.) would

be deposited for investment in New Mexico businesses, agriculture, and capital projects. The bank would be run by professional bankers, not by politicians. A firewall would ensure that the funds would be secure and the process would be transparent. Loans could take the place of bonds for public projects, lowering project costs. Some of our tax money is already invested locally, but most goes to Wall Street. Sullivan said we don’t know how our funds are currently invested, but global banks maximize profits for private stockholders.

Melissa Pickett, the AFLEP Outreach Coordinator, stated that the current economic picture is rooted in a global model, based on unaccountable global supply chains. The pandemic has revealed the vulnerability of globalism; the local economy is a lifeboat. The public bank is a tool to create the community we want by financing small business, Main Street projects, and infrastructure upgrades. It will support retirees and new businesses and diversify the economy, complementing LANL.

Pickett said we export 97% of the food we produce and import an equivalent amount. We should aim to be more self-sufficient. As big



Elaine Sullivan, Chair of the AFLEP Board of Directors, speaks via Zoom. Screenshot by Barbara Calef.

banks have acquired little banks, the number of loans to small businesses has fallen.

Angela Merkert is the AFLEP Executive Director. She said that currently most of the state's income is invested overseas and suggested that \$400 million could be taken from the Land Grant Permanent Fund and used for loans to small businesses. With a public bank, legislators would not have cancelled or delayed capital projects during the Special Session. The public bank could provide focus, efficiency, and effectiveness, creating or enhancing community wealth. She quoted the economist Milton Friedman, who said, "Only a crisis produces real change and then it depends on ideas lying around."

The next step for the group is to raise awareness (AFLEP held forums in Santa Fe in 2014 and Albuquerque in 2015), through community outreach and meetings with legislators. A memorial calling for a study died in 2019; however, there will be a bill to create a public bank in the 2021 regular session.

For more information or to volunteer, go to the website www.aflep.org. The only public bank in the country is the Bank of North Dakota, which was founded in 1919. During the question and answer period Toyoko Tsukuda called in from Washington to say that the LWVWA had just voted to support legislation for a public bank as a depository for state funds based on the LWVWA privatization position. The LWVWA League website lists a number of interesting papers under <https://lwvwa.org/Studies-&-Reports>, go to [Public Banking \(Work in Progress by Public Bank Task Force\)](#).

Barbara Calef

Update on Preparations for the November Election

In August Senator Daniel Ivey-Soto spoke to LWVNM about SB 4, the Temporary Elections Act, passed by the legislature during the recent special session. Later in the month staff from the Office of the Secretary of State presented information about preparations for the November election to the Interim Committee on Courts, Corrections, and Justice.

From the presentations we learned that many voters received applications in the mail from the Center for Voter Information, a non-partisan organization. Some received more than one. The unexpected mail created confusion and concern among the recipients. CVI had notified the SOS of their intention, but not the county clerks, who were flooded with inquiries about the validity of the forms. (The forms are valid, but there were some errors in voters' names and county clerks' addresses.)

Senator Ivey-Soto explained that, as specified in SB 4, a public health order from the Secretary of Health prior to the election could impact the conduct of the election, e.g., the number of people allowed in a polling place at one time. A public health order would not allow the county clerks to send out ballots that had not been requested.

Other interesting announcements:

- Additional high-speed scanners have been purchased for tabulating absentee ballots.
- Some temporary ballot drop boxes will be provided for the 2020 election, at least one per county. Staffing is required for them.
- The post office will set up a team to make sure ballots are not piling up somewhere.

- Citizens eligible to vote but not registered will be contacted and encouraged to register.
- Homeless people can register, drawing a map showing where they usually sleep. They must provide a mailing address.
- Polling places on Indian Nation, tribal, and pueblo lands will be allowed to operate even if access is denied to voters who live outside the boundaries.
- At the polling places, there will be a separate line for voters wanting to drop off ballots.
- In counties where more than 10,000 absentee ballots have been requested, processing can begin up to 2 weeks before election day. In all other counties it can begin 5 days before election day.
- On election day the absentee ballot board will stop work at 11 p.m. On subsequent days they will work from 9:30 a.m. until 8 p.m. until they finish.

Here is some information relevant to voters in our county:

Registration

- The deadline to register to vote by mail for the 2020 General Election is 5 p.m. on October 6.
- The deadline to register to vote online at NMVote.org is 11:59 p.m. on October 6.
- In-Person Same Day Voter Registration at the County Clerk's Office will be available October 6 through Oct 16, Monday – Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Oct. 17 through Oct 31, Monday – Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Request for Absentee Ballot

- Voters may request an absentee ballot online now at nmvote.gov.

- Applications for an absentee ballot will be mailed to all registered voters in the county on September 14. (Only 10 counties are participating in this effort.)
- No ballots will be mailed unless a request has been received by the county clerk.
- All requests for an absentee ballot must be received in the county clerk's office by October 20.

Voting

- Ballots must be mailed to the county clerk by October 27 to be assured of arriving by 7 p.m. on November 3.
- The mailed ballots will carry an intelligent mail bar code so they can be tracked from the time they are mailed by the county clerk until they are returned to the county clerk's office.
- The name, signature and the last four digits of the voter's social security number must be written on the outer envelope for the ballot to be accepted.
- The ballot may be returned to a ballot drop box or polling place by the voter, the voter's caretaker, or a member of the voter's immediate family.
- Voters may choose to vote in person during Early Voting or on Election Day.
- Early Voting will be available at the Los Alamos County Municipal Building beginning October 6, as well as the White Rock Town Hall beginning October 17. Early Voting ends October 31.
- On Election Day, Tuesday, November 3, eligible voters may vote at any of the following Vote Centers: Los Alamos County Municipal Building, White Rock Town Hall and the Los Alamos County Golf Course.

For additional information on anything related to the 2020 General Election in Los Alamos County, call the Clerk's Office at (505) 662-8010. Check for updates at <http://www.losalamosnm.us/clerk>.

League Preparations

The voter guide questions have been sent to all candidates. The LWVLA Board voted to publish responses in the printed voter guide from unopposed candidates as well as those facing opposition.

We plan to hold two candidate forums via Zoom. The first forum will be from 6:30-8:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 1 for the candidates for the Third Congressional District, Public Regulation Commission District 3, Public Education Commission District 4, and NM Senate District 5.

The second forum will be on Monday, October 5 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. for the candidates for NM House District 43 and the County Council candidates.

Barbara Calef



LWVLA Board of Directors 2020-2021

Officers:

- Co-president: Barbara Calef
- Co-president: Rebecca Shankland
- 1st Vice-President: *Unfilled*
- 2nd Vice-President: Ellen Mills
- Secretary: Rebecca Chaiken
- Treasurer: Rosmarie Frederickson

Directors:

- Reservations: Amy Birnbaum
- Lunch with a Leader: Karyl Ann Armbruster
- Voter Services: Lynn Jones
- BPU Observer: Julie Williams-Hill
- Publicity: Jody Benson and Leslie Wallstrom
- Director at Large: Akkana Peck
- Fundraising: Rosmarie Frederickson

Off-board Directors:

- Arrangements: Wendy Swanson
- Membership: Rebecca Shankland
- Webmaster: Julie Williams-Hill
- Special Projects: Addie Jacobson
- Newsletter Editor: JoAnn Lysne
- County Council Observers: LWVLA Board
- Nominations: Ellen Mills, Leslie Wallstrom, and JoAnn Lysne

If you would like to join the League, fill out and submit the membership form on page 11.

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): \$70

____ 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, BPU, 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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