

THE VOTER

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County
www.lwvstanislaus.org



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Amy Wolfe

LWVSC President

Dear LWVSC Members and Friends,

Election season is now upon us and we are working actively to provide educational opportunities for our community. Many thanks to Jennie Sweeney for being so proactive, reaching out to the NAACP, Stanislaus Latino Community Roundtable, West Modesto Collaborative, and others to identify ways we can work together to get out the vote. Check out the variety of Voter Service volunteer opportunities on page 7 and reach out to Jennie to learn more.

I'm also thrilled to share that we will be partnering with the Leagues of Women Voters of Greater Los Angeles and Nevada County, along with the Personal Insurance Federation of California, to host a virtual forum for the California Insurance Commissioner candidates. It will be on April 29th starting at 5:30 pm. Registration details are on page 9.

Our monthly Meet and Learn luncheon series this month focuses on water. Join us on April 23rd to hear from Randy Fiorini, Turlock farmer and state water expert, as he discusses the five most pressing water issues impacting California. Details on how to register can be found on page 8. The LWV of California is also focused on water and has begun sharing a monthly *Water Spotlight* article, which can be [found on our website](#).

Finally, I look forward to seeing you as this year's Annual Meeting, being held on May 13th starting at 5:30 pm at AgSafe. We are delighted that Donna Linder, Stanislaus County Clerk-Recorder will join us to provide vital timely updates on the June primary election and if it passes, the impact the SAVE Act would have locally moving forward. Read more specifics on page 11.

In Service,

Amy

2025-2026 Board of Directors

President
Amy Wolfe

Vice President
Angelina Ceja

Secretary
Anita Bruce

Treasurer
Ellen Meyer

State Action - Water
Seena Rhine

State Action - Health
Terry Shanahan

Local Action
Colleen Preston

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Colleen Norby
Laurie Carley

Finance Drive
Theresa Kiehn

Voter Service
Jennie Sweeney
Marsha Waggoner

*Public Relations:
Membership*
Marie Bairey

Public Relations:Public
Vivian Lopez

Voter Editor
Jane Manley

Website Manager
Stella Beratlis

Nominating Chair
Vivian Lopez

LWVSC Board Meeting Highlights

March 2026

The LWVSC Board of Directors met on March 11, 2026, to conduct its regular business. Highlights are below.

- Treasurer Ellen Meyer will assist the 2026-27 elected treasurer with the transition to Quick Books.
- Colleen Norby reported that LWVSC has four new members, putting us at 125 total members.
- Jennie Sweeney, Voter Service Chair discussed collaborating with Latino Community Roundtable and the NAACP to encourage people to vote.
- The board discussed using more social media channels to publicize our chapter and its activities.

LWVSC Workgroup - Modesto 2050 General Plan

The LWVSC Modesto 2050 General Plan Workgroup met on March 26th to review the three land use alternatives proposed to update the General Plan and direct future growth. The group determined that additional information is needed from city leaders before formally submitting feedback on the options.

A letter requesting details around the impetus for growth, transportation planning, coordination with state water regulations, and synergy with economic development has been sent to the Modesto City Council, Modesto Planning Commission, and key city staff. We are hopeful they respond in a timely and thoughtful manner.

If you are interested in being part of the working group, contact Amy Wolfe at amy@mujeres-poderosas.org



Megan Belair
Debra Hendrix
Judy Pierce

Debra Brady
Tara Kennelly
Mary Ann Sanders

League of Women Voters of Stanislaus County

2026-2027 Officers and Board of Directors Nominations

Per LWVSC bylaws the 2026-2027 Board of Directors slate must be presented to the membership at least 30 days prior to the Annual Meeting, at which time they will be voted on by the membership. The LWVSC Nominating Committee submits the following slate for membership consideration. The slate will be voted on at the Annual Meeting on May 13, 2026.

Officers

President
Amy Wolfe

Vice President
Angelina Ceja

Secretary
Laurie Carley

Treasurer
Kelly Gregerson

Board Members

Local Action
Theresa Kiehn and Vivian Lopez

Membership
Colleen Norby and Laurie Carley

Voter Service
Jennie Sweeney and Marsha Waggoner

Voter Editor
Jane Manley

Nominating Committee Chair
Vivian Lopez

Support the Equal Rights Amendment!



Sign on in support of the Equal Rights Amendment

<https://www.sign4era.org/>

This movement is solely focused on enshrining the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Local Action Update

Update on land development and city growth plans provided by Local Action Chair Colleen Preston.

Modesto General Plan 2050. Modesto's general plan is the blueprint of future growth, required by State law and updated every 10-15 years to respond to economic conditions and identified challenges. It must address ground water sustainability, climate change, transportation, jobs and housing balance. Modesto's review and adoption is the spring of 2027 and the update will guide the city's development through 2050. Three growth options have been proposed, including a "competitive" or aggressive plan, a moderate plan and a strategy for minimal growth.

The most aggressive growth option would extend Modesto north to Ladd Road, include commercial and business parks west of Vintage Faire Mall and plot industrial development along the Highway 132 bypass route to Hart Road. The option also calls for some development on the east side of the city.

ACTION: LWVSC started a working group to review the plans and consider taking a position.

Riverbank Initiative 2026 and River Walk Development. This proposed development is 2 miles from downtown Riverbank and encompasses approximately 997 acres of the 1500 acres that currently is in the unincorporated area of Stanislaus County. Riverbank wants to stretch to McHenry Avenue. Due to land annexation in 2016, Riverbank has ample pre-approved land available to construct thousands of new homes. The need for this project has not been demonstrated.

2026 Key Dates - Urban Growth Initiative November 2026 that seeks Riverbank voter approval to expand westward from current city boundaries. To track the updates regarding River Walk there is a new website page: <https://riverbank.org/609/River-Walk-Project>

ACTION: Close attention and attendance to hearings at the Planning Commission, City Council, LAFCO, and the outcome of the November initiative.

Scannell Project in Salida. This project comprises a 145-acre warehouse development on the northwest corner of Dale Road and Kiernan, just north of the Kaiser facility. To speed up the process, the Scannell developers requested annexation to the City of Modesto to utilize existing infrastructure for water, sewer, and storm drainage. Dry utility infrastructure (i.e. electrical, gas, telephone, cable) would also be installed. The site is located within Stanislaus County and Modesto's General Plan Area, but outside its Sphere of Influence (SOI). The project includes an amendment to incorporate into Modesto's SOI. Concurrent with the SOI amendment, the project proposes annexing the 145-acre site into the City of Modesto.

ACTION: Monitor for pending EIR in the spring 2026, City of Modesto meetings, Stanislaus County LAFCO meetings, and Salida's response and position on this proposal.

Farmland Working Group Initiative. Farmland Working Group is preparing a voter initiative to be placed on the 2028 ballot. Voter approval of the measure would establish an urban limit for Modesto along Kiernan Avenue, which runs from Highway 99 to McHenry Avenue, where it becomes Claribel Road. The urban limit also would extend along Claribel Road to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway tracks near Riverbank. The group will need to collect signatures from 10% of Modesto's registered voters to get the measure on the 2028 ballot.

ACTION: If the initiative is placed on the 2028 ballot, LWVSC will need to consider support based on our land use and growth policies.

LWVSC March Meet and Learn Recap

Maria Hernandez, Business & Community Development Manager

Adriana Sanchez, Administrative Assistant

STEP - Stanislaus Equity Partners

March 19, 2026

LWVSC welcomed STEP representatives Maria Hernandez and Adriana Sanchez at Gather in Modesto to explain STEP's background and projects. The development of STEP began in 2021 with results from the Stanislaus Community Foundation's research project with the Brookings Institute that examined our community's needs for economic growth, job development, and housing. Establishing a Community Development Corporation was recommended and STEP was born as a 501c3 non-profit organization. STEP's mission statement is, "Mobilize communities, partnerships and investments through housing, small business services and affordable lending to promote the well being of all residents." Maria and Adriana described STEP's activities.

Housing: Having a safe, affordable, clean and dignified place to call home is key for families and communities to thrive. Stanislaus Equity Partners connects residents with affordable mortgages. STEP also works to demonstrate new housing models that can be replicated or scaled to provide more affordable housing options. STEP searches for land parcels with potential for housing development, seeks funding to purchase them, and finds developers who will build low-income units. Small infill projects are prioritized. STEP also collaborated with agencies to provide permanent supportive housing for Stanislaus County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services clients at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Small Business: STEP provides free entrepreneurship cohorts, access to technical assistance, one-on-one support, and information on affordable lending options for local small businesses. The 6-week training provides information and assistance to entrepreneurs, including how to create a business plan, accounting, financing, and marketing. Local business leaders serve as guest speakers. Business owners also receive guidance as they learn more and grow their enterprise.

Affordable Lending: STEP connects residents with limited credit history to fair and affordable mortgage options.

STATE OF THE CITY



Our City.
Our Future.



Thursday, April 16, 2026

Doors Open at 4:30 pm &
Remarks Begin at 5:30 pm

State Theatre of Modesto
1307 J Street
Modesto, CA 95354

This event is free and open to the public. There will be free parking available at Modesto Centre Plaza.

LWVSC on Social Media

Be sure to like, follow and share with your networks!



@lwwstanislauscounty



@lwwstanco

GET INVOLVED!! • BECOME A VOTER SERVICE VOLUNTEER



Poll Worker

Volunteer to be a poll worker.

Learn more and submit your application [online](#)



Community Partner

Attend partner organizations' community events and share League resources, information, and overall support



Community Presentations

Volunteer to present info about voting, the election, and the issues.

Spanish-speakers needed

Training provided

Join the team – your community needs you!

Questions? Ready to volunteer?

Contact Jennie Sweeney at jenniesweeney@gmail.com or 209-404-4414



MEET & LEARN

April 23, 2026

12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

Gather, 2424 McHenry Avenue, Modesto

Randy Fiorini, Turlock Farmer and Water Expert

Join us as our speaker shares his perspective on the 5 most pressing water issues in California.

Cost: \$30 per person

Register online at www.lwvstanislaus.org or scan:

Advanced registrations online required.

Deadline is April 20, 2026 at 11 am.



Upcoming Meet & Learn Luncheon

May 21, 2026: Griselda Rojas, Community Organizer, Faith in the Valley
Understanding the Valley Watch Network and how it is educating and supporting our immigrant communities.

Thank you to our Meet & Learn Sponsors



Kay and Mike Christensen

Anonymous

Marie Bairey

Laurie Carley

Kenni and Lou Friedman

Theresa Kiehn

Angelina Ceja

CA INSURANCE COMMISSIONER CANDIDATE FORUM

YOUR VOICE, YOUR VOTE



APRIL 29, 2026 | 5:30 PM

VIRTUAL FORUM | SCAN TO REGISTER



Presented by



PIFC

PERSONAL INSURANCE FEDERATION
OF CALIFORNIA

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF STANISLAUS COUNTY

BOOK CLUB

May 6, 2026

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Nick Blom Salida Regional Library

Lula Dean's Little Library of Banned Books

By Kirsten Miller

Join us for a discussion with the author, moderated by Dr. Shannon Stevens, CSU Stanislaus Journalism Professor. Sarah Dentan, Stanislaus County Librarian, will also share the Library's Collection Development Policy.

Lula Dean is on a mission to rid her public library of all inappropriate books - none of which she has actually read. But when a local troublemaker removes the wholesome books in Lula's own Little Free Library and replaces them with banned books, chaos ensues and lives are changed in unexpected ways.



Kirsten Miller
Author



Sarah Dentan
Stanislaus County
Librarian



Dr. Shannon Stevens
CSUS Journalism
Professor



Register for this free event using the QR code or
tinyurl.com/SLWVbookclub. For more information, contact Book
Club Coordinator Denise Nordell at (209) 840-8825 or
denisenordell@gmail.com



Annual Meeting

MAY

13

5:30 PM

AgSafe

1935 G Street, Modesto

5:30 pm: Reception

6:00 pm: Guest speaker

Donna Linder, Stanislaus County Clerk-Recorder and Registrar of Voters

Current voting protocol, common misinformation, and how LWVSC can support fair elections

6:45 pm: LWVSC Annual Meeting

Secure parking entrance on La Loma Avenue (green star)

Please bring your favorite appetizer to share



RSVP by 5/8/26 to Angelina Ceja at angelina@agsafe.org or 209-216-6288