

The VOTER

League of Women Voters
of Greater Las Cruces
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
[http://lwvlascruces.
home.comcast.net](http://lwvlascruces.home.comcast.net)
July 2009



Health Care Reform: Legislative Options July 15 (Wednesday) - 6:30-8:30 p.m. - Good Samaritan Auditorium

Are you confused about health care reform—terminology, plans, legislation, cost, delivery, insured, uninsured? The Las Cruces League is sponsoring an educational forum to discuss health care reform, an issue that is on the “fast track” in the U.S. Congress, and over which media commentators are presenting “sound bites” with few in-depth details.

A panel composed of John Ameriks, Meade Kemrer, and Vicki Simons, will be presenting information about proposed congressional legislation, changes in health care delivery, and potential need to address health care reform at the state level. A question and answer period will follow for public comment. The forum is open to the public.

John Ameriks, M.D., is a retired vascular surgeon and former member of the Board of Directors of Blue Shield of Nevada. He is involved with Physicians for a National Health Care Program. Meade Kemrer, Ph.D., is co-chair of the Las Cruces Organizing for America Health Care Reform Group. Although retired, he continues to perform archaeological research in southern New Mexico. Vicki Simons, MPH, is chair of Health Care, League of Women Voters of New Mexico. She has lived in Las Cruces since 1965 and spent her career at Memorial Medical Center, retiring as Laboratory Director.

Please read the latest news we have, as we go to press, on health care reform, pp. 5 and 6. As mentioned, the news changes from day-to-day as congressional legislation is developed. Our panelists are in touch with staff in our congressional delegation to keep on top of changes. We look forward to seeing you and hearing your comments at the forum.

CALENDAR

July 6 (Monday) - Board Meeting, 5:00 p.m., Branigan Library Board Room. Members are welcome.

July 12 (Monday) - **NO Lunch with a Leader** this month. **Plan to attend** the forum on Health Care Reform. (See above article.)

July 15 (Wednesday) - **Forum on Health Care Reform**, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Good Samaritan Village, Auditorium, 1st floor, 3011 Buena Vida Circle. See above article for details. **This event is free and open to the public.**

Mark Your Calendar

July 4 (Saturday) - Independence Day

August 21 (Friday) - Climate Change Forum, Albuquerque

November 14 (Saturday) - “Big Event”, Recycling Electronics

VOTER DEADLINE

July 15 — Noon

Email copy to Bonnie Burn (burnb@comcast.net)

Tel: 526-0013

Notable Events

July 19 - First Women’s Convention, 1848, Seneca, New York.

The VOTER

Volume 40, Issue 3 - July 2009
Published Monthly

**The League of Women Voters of
Greater Las Cruces**

P.O. Box 8322
Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322
(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
<http://lwvlas Cruces.home.comcast.net>

President—Bonnie Burn

Vice President & Voter Services
Vicki Simons

Secretary—Nancy Phillips

Treasurer—Roberta Gran

Director, Membership
Pat Pedersen

Director, Program
Sharon Burbano

Director, Public Relations
Marnie Leverett

Nominating Committee
Johnnie Aldrich, Chair
Marjorie Burr, Elected Member

STUDY GROUPS

Behavioral Health Services
Becky Beckett—522-8171
Mickey Curtis—532-5655

**Election Procedures and
Voter Turnout**
Marnie Leverett—522-0347

Metropolitan Court
Marjorie Burr—522-2528

ACTION COMMITTEE
Vicki Simons—522-4813

Archivist—Barbara Myers
Historian—(Vacant)
Web Master—Jim Leverett
marniej@comcast.net

Newsletter Editor
Bonnie Burn—526-0013
burnb@comcast.net

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces, 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.

President's Message

Although the New Mexico legislative session ended in March, the interim committees are meeting now. Members of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico's (LWVNM) Action Committee are attending and reporting on activities through the lwvNMTopics and lwvNMAAction listservs. If you want to join the conversation, let me know and I will ask Kathy Campbell, president, LWVNM, to sign you up. It was gratifying to learn that our emails and telephone calls to legislators during the 2009 session paid off, especially with the defeat of the SunCal tax increment development district (TIDD) request. (See Look Back, p. 3.)

On the federal level, LWVUS is urging members to meet with their local congressional leaders to discuss the League's positions on health care and climate change. Talking points and papers prepared by the Task Force on climate change are available on the LWVUS web site, www.lwv.org. In April, Marnie Leverett and I spoke with U. S. Representative Teague in support of LWVUS's position on climate change. We asked him to support legislation (1) that sets a strong and effective cap on greenhouse gases based on the best available science and (2) that includes investment for international adaptation.

Regarding health care reform Vicki Simons and I met with Jake Redfearn, a member of U.S. Representative Teague's staff, to present the League's position on health care adopted in 1993. In recent weeks, we had an opportunity to hear statements made by members of staff for Senators Bingaman and Udall, who could not be present, at the Health Action New Mexico community dialogue held on June 3rd at the County Government Complex.

The immediacy of health care reform legislation spurred us to organize a committee and public forum on the topic. We invite you to attend our community forum on July 15 as advertised on p.1. With Vicki Simons' leadership, we felt a forum would help give reliable, nonpartisan information to the community. Remember to invite your family and friends, as the forum is open to the public. (See Health Care Reform Article, pp. 5-6)

State Representative Jeff Steinborn contacted Marnie Leverett seeking the League's support for the latest wilderness legislation, Citizens Wilderness and National Conservation Area Proposal, that will be forthcoming from Senator Bingaman's office. This legislation seeks wilderness status for a number of areas that have already achieved Wilderness Study Area designation. (See article p. 4.)

Finally, I congratulate our observers who volunteered to attend various community organization meetings during the past month and whose written reports are published on pp. 7-9. Since the newsletter is distributed to elected officials in the community, they will be aware of our interest in the work that they do.

There is much work that the League can do in the community. Please let me know your interest. Remember an organization is only as viable as its members wish to make it.

Bonnie Burn

LOOK BACK*Building Trust - A Coalition That Works*

Lora Lucero, AICP, Natural Resources Director, LWVNM, traveled to Las Cruces to help us understand coalition building and how it worked in the 2009 legislative session when the SunCal tax increment development district (TIDD) request was defeated.

The League of Women Voters of New Mexico (LWVNM) was invited to join 21 other groups—educators, union workers, advocates for children, conservationists—to work toward reforming the Tax Increment Development District Act, a flawed piece of legislation. As the legislative session progressed, however, it was evident that a TIDD legislative request from SunCal needed attention. Working together and separately, the request was defeated by a vote of 33-33, even though SunCal poured nearly a quarter of a million dollars into an advertising campaign and used 11 lobbyists to work the halls of the State Capitol for two months.

How did this happen? The coalition of 22 organizations worked via email—some members still have not met and have interacted only by email or telephone. Identifying and affirming the strengths and talents of group members is a first step. Building trust and respect for each other is important, as the goal of the effort cannot be lost especially when members worked together some of the time and separately at other times. Communication is critical. Even though there wasn't a leader, an individual came forward who provided the "glue" that kept the group together. The coalition exercised a great deal of flexibility as the legislative scene changed. Members held the same goals but took different paths to reach them.

The reputations of the organizations involved provided a great deal of leverage with the legislators observed Bob Hearn, who worked with the coalition. On the legislative side, Senator Steve Fischmann congratulated League members who emailed and telephoned their legislators as the final vote drew near. The broadcast emails sent to our members by our local Legislative Action Committee paid off. Some of the legislators questioned Senator Fischmann about the interest in the TIDD issue being shown by Las Cruces, and it made them recognize the influence our area can have.

Lora reminded all of us to be careful of the "dinosaurs," the antiquated systems and outmoded ways of operating that are unable to respond to the challenges of the future. As dinosaurs are now extinct because they couldn't adapt to their changing environment, we face some of the most serious challenges in our lifetimes—particularly with climate change. Business as usual will not lead to the kind of environment we want to leave for our grandchildren. We need to work cooperatively in new coalitions to address these challenges.

Two heads are always better than one; a whole coalition of thoughtful people is definitely stronger than just one.

Lora Lucero

**New Members**

Susan Schmugge
5152 Hunter Chase Road
Las Cruces, 88011-2544
Tel: 522-4546
Email: sschmugge@aol.com

Charlotte Lipson

Betty Lovelace
3045 Buena Vida Circle (#117)
Las Cruces, 88011
Tel: 522-3353

In Appreciation

To those who contributed generously
April 18-June 15, 2006

Johnnie Aldrich
Marcia Anderson
Shirley Armstrong
Jane Asche
Becky Beckett
Ruth Benjamins
Bonnie & Bob Burn
Marjorie & Alex Burr
Polly Evans
Barbara Goedecke
Lee Kershner
Pat Kratz
Marnie Leverett
Sue Liefeld
Christina & William Little
Louise Lockhart
Lynn Olson
Pat Pedersen
Betty Pool
Vicki Simons
Kathy Wooten
Dale Yeo
Ellen Young

Membership Directory (2009-2010) will be produced during July. Please send any changes in your information to Pat Pederson, 522-3859 or patped6@yahoo.com.

Board Meeting Highlights—June 1, 2009

Election Procedures/Voter Turnout Committee:

Marnie Leverett reported that she met with County Clerk Lynn Ellins, who encouraged the League to continue its telephone coverage during election periods and expressed an interest in having the League facilitate greater participation by high school students in the election process, possibly serving as poll workers.

Behavioral Health Study Group: Requested Board approval to change the group name to Study Group on Mental Illness Services, which more accurately reflects the scope of the study which is to identify existing and needed services for the mentally ill in Doña Ana County.

Health Care: Vicki Simons reported on the Health Care Resolution passed at State Convention that asked LWVUS to allow state and local Leagues to advocate for single-payer health care. She also gave an update on current federal legislation.

Membership: The Board approved one membership scholarship for 2009-10, made up from the interest earned on our certificate of deposit and a donation.

Program: There will be no Lunch with a Leader general meeting in July. The community forum on Health Care Reform on July 15 will be the major event. The topic for August Lunch with a Leader is the 2010 Census, and for September, is alternative fuels. Topics for the remainder of the year were brainstormed, but no decisions were reached.

Next board meeting: July 6, 2009, 5:00 p.m., Branigan Library Board Room, 2nd floor. All are welcome.

Time Marches On: Wilderness Legislation *Marnie Leverett*

At least ten years ago, as they concluded a large land use planning study, members of the League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces organized a public meeting on open spaces and wilderness areas in Doña Ana County. Sandy

Geiger and Beth Bardwell worked hard to put an informational public meeting together. Though the meeting was just a couple of weeks before Christmas, it was extremely well received and heavily attended. Out of it came The Citizens' Task Force for Open Space

Preservation, active for years, which morphed into The Open Space and Trails Network, and finally another public meeting a year or two ago which attracted 400 people and started a movement to save ten wilderness areas within the county as National Wilderness Areas under the National Wilderness Act of 1964.



The League has, over the years, worked to be part of a growing group of residents who have engaged in various preservation and conservation projects. Several years ago, Senator Domenici started working on a National Wilderness Bill that would preserve those ten of our most scenic wilderness areas within the County. When Senator Domenici retired in 2008, local advocates, including League members, continued to try to find support for his bill among our local legislators. Recently, Bonnie Burn and I accompanied State Senator Steve Fischmann and another advocate, Dean Neff, who is a home builder and real estate agent, in visiting the local offices of Senator Tom Udall and Congressman Harry Teague to talk about a new bill, the Citizens Wilderness and National Conservation Area Proposal, and future action in such a preservation plan. We were well received and felt that it was worthwhile.

The wilderness areas involved include: the Organ Mountains (Organ, Peña Blanca and Organ Mtn. Needles Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), Northern and Southern units of the Organ Mountain National Conservation Area, Sierra de Las Uvas, Broad Canyon and Robledos areas, and the Greater Potrillo Mountain Area (Aden Lava Flow, West Potrillo Mountains, and Mt. Riley WSAs, and East Potrillos Mountains). Of the 1,651,056 possible available square miles that could be designed wilderness in New Mexico, only 121,589 have that designation. New Mexico is number 10 in a list of 11 Western States in designated wilderness acreages.

NATIONAL HEALTH CARE REFORM
Vicki Simons, Chair, Health Care, LWVNM

Health care reform is moving rapidly in Congress. According to Senator Bingaman's office, the first draft of legislation will be introduced from the Senate Finance Committee the week of June 8, will be passed in June, will be reconciled with the House of Representatives' bills in the summer and will be passed into law early in the fall. Unfortunately, the public has little idea of what is happening. To help educate the public, the League is planning a public forum on July 15 at 6:30 p.m. in Good Samaritan's main auditorium. By then we should have a fairly complete idea of what legislation has been introduced.

What we know now is that several single-payer bills have been introduced in the House, primarily the Conyers bill, HR 676 or Medicare-for-all. In the Senate there also has been a single-payer bill introduced by Senator Sanders, SB 703. However, most of the serious action seems to be taking place in the Senate Finance Committee, chaired by Senator Baucus, and the Senate Health Care Committee, chaired by Senator Kennedy.

These two committees held hearings with all "stakeholders" present except advocates for a single-payer model. Senator Baucus was quoted as saying a single-payer solution is not viable because it doesn't have the votes in Congress. Single-payer advocates, doctors and nurses, have actually been taken out of hearings and arrested when they stood up and asked, after going through proper channels, why they didn't have a seat at the table.

These two senate committees seem to have chosen to use the Massachusetts plan as their model. That plan makes purchase of health insurance mandatory, sets up an exchange through which people can choose from the insurance options available and subsidizes the purchase of insurance by low-income people. In order to provide real competition for private companies and, therefore, hold costs down, a public option that would provide coverage similar to Medicare as a choice has been suggested by progressive legislators. The public plan is opposed by the insurance industry.

The problem with using the Massachusetts plan as a model is that there are serious flaws in it. While many more people are insured now, costs have continued to increase rapidly, and support for public hospitals and community clinics has decreased while demand for services at those sites has decreased only slightly. Residents who don't purchase insurance pay a fine of over \$1,000 per year. There are no controls on the amount insurance companies can charge for premiums in the plan. Massachusetts now has the most expensive insurance premiums in the country; yet, there is a segment of the population that earns too much to be subsidized but still cannot afford insurance. Massachusetts is in serious financial trouble because of the amount of money it has spent subsidizing the purchase of insurance for low-income residents.

The LWVUS has had a strong position on health care reform since 1993. It states:

"The League favors a national health insurance plan financed through general taxes in place of individual insurance premiums" . . . believes that a basic level of health care at an affordable cost should be available to all U.S. residents, . . . that cost control must be part of reform.

Since 1993 the LWV has been lobbying for single-payer health care reform bills, but this year the national board has decided to join a coalition that is lobbying for a set of politically realistic principles.

At the state convention, a resolution was passed asking the national board to allow state and local Leagues to lobby for single-payer as there are many Leagues that want to do that. Kathy Campbell, LWVNM president, forwarded our resolution to the board and remarked,

(Continued on page 6)

National Health Care Reform *(Continued from page 5)*

“Large changes such as moving to single-payer health care come when a tipping point is reached, when what was impossible yesterday becomes tomorrow’s received wisdom. When over 60% of the American Medical Association (AMA) supports single-payer, when icons such as General Motors are crumbling beneath their obligations to pay health care costs inflated by the need to support the CEOs and shareholders of private insurance companies, while many smaller enterprises (and also large ones like Walmart) are abandoning the attempt to provide health care for their employees altogether, and when more and more Americans are becoming aware that other models for health care—most basically single-payer, although there are variations in detail—are producing far better outcomes in all of the other developed nations in the world, that tipping point is not far off.”

She goes on to add that she is sorry to see the national League not leading in this charge for real reform.

The New Mexico League Health Care Committee, of which I am chair, agrees with Kathy. “When the League moves towards what it perceives to be the “center” in the absence of comparable concessions from other parties to the debate, it loses all influence.” The public option with a strong oversight board must be part of the final legislation, or in the words of Howard Dean, “It [health care] will not be reformed at all.” If the final legislation mandates insurance from private companies with no real competition or inclusion of stringent regulation and premium cost control, there will be little incentive or mechanism to control costs. Remember, the large proportion of uninsured and underinsured in the U.S. is a result of the primary problem which is runaway costs.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING AD HOC COMMITTEE

*Win Jacobs, Chair, Housing Authority
of the City of Las Cruces.*

Last summer, the Mayor appointed an ad hoc committee “to oversee the development of a plan to better meet the affordable housing needs in Las Cruces.” As chair of the Housing Authority of the City of Las Cruces, I was one of the thirteen appointees. Working with BBC Research & Consulting and Clarion Associates, out of Denver, we met monthly; our charge was to evaluate existing programs, identify opportunities for program and policy modification, evaluate and recommend new programs and policies, and identify possible improvements in the City’s land use codes and zoning categories.

The required update of the City’s comprehensive plan requires an update of the affordable housing component of that plan.

At its May 14 meeting, the ad hoc committee agreed to forward to Planning and Zoning, thence to City Council, the following recommendations for immediate implementation:

1. set production and preservation goals, and monitor their achievement

2. establish a land bank
3. establish a housing trust fund either by a general obligation bond or by recycling of existing bonds
4. change development policies in these ways
 - proactively re-zone land into the R-4 zone
 - adjust the R-4/C-3 zone height and density
 - adopt minimum density for R-1-b, R-2, and R-3 zones
 - refine R-1-b zone and provide templates
 - reduce residential parking requirements
 - refine accessory dwelling unit regulations
 - expand impact fee exemption

The background of need is too well documented to call for reiteration here. Check out the current comprehensive plan at Branigan Library or through the City’s website; too little has changed in the interim. Consequently, this report has focused on specifics for the (more or less) immediate future suggested by the ad hoc committee. Should you have questions, you are welcome to call me (521-9331) or e-mail winjacobs@q.com. By all means watch for the notice of a public hearing by Planning and Zoning (P&Z) and then by City Council, www.las-cruces.org, and plan to attend and participate!

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS

The League's Observer Corps enables greater coverage and information gathering, can provide early warning of upcoming issues of concern, can increase League's visibility, and can assist in networking with other groups. We appreciate the reports that are submitted by Observers. Following the League practice of publishing nonpartisan, objective reports, the information submitted may be edited for content and brevity.

Board of County Commissioners Work Session - May 26, 2009 *Bonnie Burn, Observer*

At its May 12th meeting, County Commissioners reduced the MVEDA budget allocation from a former \$100,000 to \$60,375. This action precipitated a work session at which the Commissioners reconsidered that decision.

MVEDA is a public/private sector partnership that provides economic development services in southern New Mexico (e.g., marketing and lead generation, research and consulting and retention and expansion of services for businesses). It receives funding from the City, County, the University, community college, public school district, and other businesses and organizations for a total budget of \$600,000. The county funding is achieved through a request for proposal (RFP) process that is coordinated by the Health and Human Services Department. The RFPs are reviewed by a volunteer panel that makes recommendations for approval by the Commissioners.

A major concern of the Commissioners was rural development (Chaparral, Anthony, and Santa Teresa in the south and Hatch and other communities in the north). During public input, members of the community raised the issue of encouraging small businesses rather than manufacturing in these areas. At present, County ordinances are not in place that could provide access to state dollars for economic development through the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA). Members of the agricultural community raised the issue of need for help with marketing and finding new markets for their products.

Chuck McMahon, director, Community Planning and Economic Development, Doña Ana County, and Davin Lopez, president and CEO, MVEDA, made presentations. At the end of the work session, the Commissioners expressed support

for restoring MVEDA to its original level of funding, \$100,000, a vote to be taken at a future Commission meeting.

Las Cruces Metropolitan Planning Organization (LCMPO) Policy Committee *Cathy Mathews, Observer*

During the June 10th meeting, two items of particular interest were discussed: (1) a feasibility study for commuter rail between Las Cruces, NM, and El Paso, TX, was added to the agenda by committee member and Las Cruces City Councilor Sharon Thomas; and (2) presentation of a memorial by State Representative Jeff Steinborn that he presented at the 2009 legislature session and later presented at the joint work session of the Las Cruces and the El Paso City Councils.

The memorial originally requested a study of the feasibility of bringing a commuter rail system to the route from Belen, NM, to Las Cruces. Upon further consideration, Representative Steinborn modified the memorial to request the study for a route from Las Cruces to El Paso. U.S. Congressmen Teague (Doña Ana County) and Reyes (El Paso) are also pursuing the idea of a commuter rail system from Las Cruces to El Paso.

Discussed was the right-of-way acquisition that may be the most difficult and costly part of the project. Signalization and track condition must also be considered. The total estimated cost for the project is between \$185M and \$700M. Bus service between the two communities will start in September 2009. City Councilor Small, a member of the audience, commented that the numerous smaller communities between Las Cruces and El Paso will benefit from the increased traffic and from the access to public transportation.

The second item of discussion was the recommendations for action provided for in the Location Study Action Plan which was delivered to

(Continued on page 8)

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS (Continued)**MPO Policy Committee** *(Continued from page 7)*

the committee at the February meeting. The actions recommended in the plan include:

1. Accept a modified Joint Powers Agreement (JPA).
2. Change the by-laws to recognize Ad Hoc Committees,
3. Invite the Federal Highway Administration to annually address the LCMPO Policy Committee.
4. Amend the by-laws to include NM Department of Transportation District Engineer and representatives from the NM House of Representatives and NM Senate as voting members of the Policy Committee.
5. Adopt a schedule of user fees.
6. Adopt goal and performance measures
7. Adopt a single and transparent scoring process for NM Department of Transportation and MPO projects.

Before leaving, the observer was able to hear the discussion that centered on item 1, amending the JPA, which was originally adopted in 1989 and has not been amended or changed since it was originally adopted.

Las Cruces Public School District
Pat Pederson, Observer

At its regular scheduled meeting, on May 19th, two school board members were absent, Chuck Davis and Bonnie Votaw. The regular business of presenting awards included Teacher of the Year to Nancy Hollingsworth from Oñate High School, who was nominated by her English class. In addition to announcements of promotions and transfers of principals and other staff, board members heard a presentation about the English/Spanish literacy program at Sonoma Elementary school. Financial approvals were given for budget items, and a contract was let for environmental and energy control for all schools. Also, a contract was approved for Bradbury Stamm to construct a new middle school on the East Mesa (Jornada and Peachtree Hills Road).

A joint meeting of the Las Cruces City Council and the Las Cruces Public School (LCPS) District took

place on June 11th. Three main items were discussed:

1. New schools: the City agreed to provide infrastructure for access to the high school on Dripping Springs Road and the middle and elementary schools on Jornada and Peachtree Hills Roads.
2. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): that is currently under development for recreational facilities and athletic fields use. The City agreed to maintain these facilities in exchange for use of these properties. A soccer field for Oñate High School, easier access to facilities and fields by the students and public, and elimination of duplicate services were discussed. The MOU will expire in 2010.
3. A recycling program for six pilot schools was proposed by Patrick Peck, director, South Central Waste Management Authority (SCWMA). The program is funded through a grant awarded to SCWMA, and involves education, recycling containers, pickup, and monitoring.

Las Cruces Public School District
Nancy Phillips Observer

At its June 2 meeting, all board members were in attendance. The new basketball coach at Las Cruces High School, William Benjamin, was introduced and spoke a few enthusiastic words.

Superintendent Rounds reported that the 2009-2010 budget is a balanced one. Full-time-equivalent employees (FTEs) were reduced by 70, and 40 were re-hired. Salaries, including State dollars and "stabilization" funds comprise 88.1% of the total budget. The number of days teachers work was reduced by one. Their health insurance coverage costs the same amount, but their co-pay was increased. The budget will be adjusted after the school year begins and a more accurate student count is available. All Board members except Maria Flores voted to approve the budget as presented.

Next, Superintendent Rounds announced that the White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) expansion will not be taking place, and the anticipated 3200 new students are not coming after all. However, there

LEAGUE OBSERVER REPORTS (Continued)

are 100 more troops at WSMR with an estimated 1.62 students per person actually in place now.

T. Dean reported that the Dolores Huerta Charter School met all the accreditation requirements to remain a charter school. The school's balanced budget for 2009-2010 is \$1.3 million, with an enrollment of 40 students in each grade level for a total of 120. The school hopes to expand but cannot do so now with limited funding and facilities.

The 2009-10 budget for Las Montanas Charter High School is \$3.3 million overall with 13 new classrooms and a projected 100 new freshmen in the coming year. Both charter schools' budgets were unanimously approved by the Board.

Dr. Mary Oxford gave a presentation about the Enhancing Education Through Technology program funded by Title 2D funds. Piloted at San Andreas High School and offered at the other three high schools, the eventual goal is to move it into the elementary schools using iPod casting.

A second presentation was made about an on-line math project for middle school students called The Honors Geometry project. This project will begin in August 2009. The project is recruiting partners from industry to mentor students. There will be five middle schools in New Mexico on-line at one time during the first period of the day. Students participating will be identified by their high potential and readiness and must have completed algebra. There are 18 students registered for August. The students will receive credit for high school honors and have the advantage of staying in their home school.

Dr. Doug Brown, a volunteer from the Science Education Alliance (SEA), presented a summary of this program for 2008-09. The funding came from a Honeywell Corporation grant. There were 71 volunteers from NASA, NMSU, retirees and the City of Las Cruces who provided 1300 hours in kindergarten through 4th grade classrooms and provided science backpacks and field trips to NASA, White Sands, NMSU labs and other demonstration stations.

**The South Central Recycling Partnership, (SCRaP) - Allen McBrayer, Observer**

The South Central Recycling Partnership (SCRaP) met on Thursday, June 11. A presentation was given on the new "Waste-In-Place" recycling program that is set to begin this fall at six Las Cruces public schools (LCPS): Camino Real and Picacho Middle Schools and Central, Desert Hills, Mesilla Park, and University Hills Elementary schools. LCPS is partnering with the South Central Solid Waste Authority, City of Las Cruces Recycling and Keep Las Cruces Beautiful, for this cost saving and waste reduction program. This is a pilot program and will involve training both teachers and students. It also includes an audit to assess available waste at the schools and how disposal meshes with the current system. In the future, there is a possibility of expansion of a "Single Stream" program at the schools, opening it to the public.

We learned about the "Rural Recycling Conference" held at the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque campus, earlier this month. It yielded many new and innovative ideas that were gathered into a "Rural Recycling Resource Kit" for towns of less than 10,000 people.

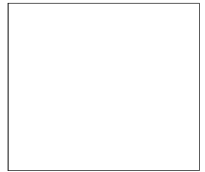
The meeting continued with a briefing on the recycling market. It is still down, but it is showing signs of recovery.

The remainder of the meeting was concerned with the planning for "America Recycles Day", Sunday, November 15. SCRaP, sponsored by the South Central Solid Waste Authority, is planning a "Big Event" for Saturday, November 14. The selection of a location, solicitation of volunteers, advertising and giveaways were discussed. The central focus of the "Big Event" will be the collection of Electronic Recyclables. This E-Scrap or E-Cycling is not considered waste. The valuable components are recycled and reused. The South Central Solid Waste Authority also will be accepting Electronic Recyclables at the Transfer Station on Amador. More information will be available after next month's meeting, Thursday, July 9.



League of Women Voter of Greater Las Cruces
 P.O. Box 8322
 Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322

(575) 524-VOTE (8683)
 Web: www.lascruces.home.comcast.net



FIRST CLASS



**PUBLIC FORUM
 HEALTH CARE
 REFORM**

July 2009

In This Issue

Health Care Forum	1
President's Message	2
Building Coalitions	3
Membership Information	3
Board Meeting Highlights	4
Wilderness Legislation	4
National Health Care Reform	5-6
Affordable Housing	6
Observer Reports	
BOCC Work Session	7
MPO Policy Committee	7
LCPS Board	8-9
SCRaP	9

COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

- Alta Vista Animal Clinic
- Binns Construction & Realty
- Joseph P. Camunez, DDS
- Compass Bank
- Doggie Dude Ranch And Cat Farm
- First American Bank
- Horizon Mechanical, Inc.
- Carole Jarden
- Joanne Korsmo
- La Paz-Graham's Funeral Home
- Lilley Law Offices
- Francisco Mario Ortiz, Esq.
- Tate Associates

Thank You

JOIN THE LEAGUE TODAY - Bring a friend with you!

Membership Type

Individual ___ \$50

1st & 2nd Household ___ \$75

Contribution to the League \$ _____

Contribution to the Education Fund \$ _____ (tax deductible)

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Mail check made out to LWV of Greater Las Cruces, P.O. Box 8322, Las Cruces, NM 88006-8322

