



VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Johnson County

How To Reach Us

PO. Box 13491
Overland Park, KS 66282
LWVJoCo@yahoo.com
www.LWVjoco.wordpress.com

President

Harriet Duff
hfduff@gmail.com

Editor

Ann Norbury
LWVnorbury@aol.com

February 2012

Volume 62
Number 7

Since 1920, the League of Women Voters has been a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Saturday, February 4 Meeting

Atonement Lutheran Church - 9948 Metcalf

8:30 a.m. - Socializing
9 - 11 a.m. - Program
11 a.m. - noon - Board Meeting

Affordable Health Care: Dreams & Lies vs Reality

Our speakers are:

Alice Kitchen, Affordable Care Act Public Education Committee

Sarah Starnes, Affordable Care Act Public Education Committee

Anna Lambertson, Kansas Health Consumer Coalition

We look forward to seeing you!

**Modernizing LWVJC Natural Resource Positions
See pages 7, 8, and 9**



President's Message

One reason the League can accomplish its mission is it is always looking forward. What is the upcoming election cycle? What legislative changes are expected or what is the future impact of past changes? How can we be well informed and how can we inform others? Will we be ready? This all takes planning.

So, now our new year is off to a great start! With your good attendance and strong ideas, the January planning meeting was a success. Thanks to you, we can anticipate some excellent programs in the upcoming year. And, thanks to our growing membership, we will continue our commitment to promoting our democratic process.

Part of our planning also includes finding more effective ways to work together. In that vein, a common theme for the past couple of years has been, "how can we take advantage of developing communication technology?" Like it or not, that is not the future -- that is the here and now. In the past years, we have moved more and more to electronic communication. This year we have worked to expand our web site and are moving toward adding social media.

With these pieces falling into place, the next task is to make sure that they function well within our organization. So, it's time to plan again. We are discussing how our VOTER editor, public relations coordinator, web master, and Annual Report editor can work together as part of an ongoing Communications Committee. Their goal would be to share news and information that extend across each form of communication, to develop a consistent graphic style, and to present a cohesive message about the League to the community. Other components could be a League photographer and others with helpful communication experience.

Does this interest you? Are you on Facebook every day or do you Twitter? Let us know about your skills -- we need them. If we want to continue reaching younger voters and adding younger members, we must become part of their chain of communication. Again, help us make another plan for the future.

Harriet Duff

Board Briefs January 7 meeting

- The Board agreed to consider recommending to LWVUS a study of the corporate personhood issue once additional information is presented at its February meeting.
- In re: updating our League positions. Paula Schwach reported that she has reviewed all summaries of LWVJC positions and has suggested wording clarification for Mental Health, Elder Care and International Relations. Board members who volunteered will review the policies before the next board meeting.
- Susan Horst announced that membership now totals 140.

Polly Swafford

Program Planning

At the January 7 League meeting, members suggested the following topics for future programs.

- Impact of Citizens United and corporate personhood on campaign finance
- Nonpartisan redistricting processes
- School Funding (Gov. Brownback proposed major changes)
- Kansas Primary election process and possible alternatives
- Regional Transit
- Land Use
- Sustainability in Development
- Impact of Kansas Medicaid reform and managed care contracts on Mental Health services, services for the disabled, and general Medicaid clients in JO CO
- The problems and advantages of a bi-state area
- Keystone XL Pipeline's potential impacts on Kansas
- Ogallala Aquifer's status and water management in Kansas

Program and Its Process

Following last month's annual program planning meeting, the Board received a request to further explain the League's study process. This article is a response to that request. The study process is similar whether done nationally, statewide or locally. Recall that at the January meeting two recommendations were for board consideration regarding undertaking national studies: one for Buy America or American and one for studying corporate personhood and impact of Citizens United on campaign finance. The board will make a final determination at the February board meeting regarding its study recommendation to LVWUS. Recall that only one topic may be sent forward as the local recommendation. The deadline for our electronic submission on a prescribed form is March 1, 2012.

Studies and Program Adoption. League program arises from the suggestions of its members in a process like our January meeting. At every level of the League, the board of directors is responsible for reviewing and discussing these suggestions, formulating them in appropriate language, and recommending all or some of them for adoption according to procedures specified in the bylaws. A local League's "action" or advocacy program is determined by members at its annual meeting; state and national programs are voted upon by delegates at state and national League conventions. In addition to proposing a new study, Leagues also have the option to review and update (as Ellen Miller and her committee are doing with our Natural Resources position this year), or one concurrence (in a study or position put forward by another League) or to make no recommendation.

Resources and Volunteer Time. Before recommending a study, review and update or concurrence, Leagues need to consider the resource commitment required for their own League as well as for the national League. A recommendation of a new study, review or concurrence is a request to give the recommendation a high priority for the biennium at both the local and national League levels. If a recommendation is adopted, local Leagues and LWVUS, with limited resources – money, but even more importantly volunteer time – may find it necessary to drop other activities in order to participate or to raise dues or the national share of dues.

Program Basics. A program has three parts: (1) selection of an issue, (2) study of that issue, consensus and formulating a position, and (3) use of that position to influence public policy.

Purpose. The purpose of a study at any level (local, state, national) is to educate members so that they can be informed participants in consensus and provide the necessary data for formulating the ultimate position. Leagues cannot take action without an adopted position.

Process. At the national convention, the LWVUS Board appoints a study committee chair, sets up the process for selecting the committee and approves the scope and timeline for the study. The scope is distributed to local Leagues to give general direction to the locals' preliminary work.

Concurrence or Consensus. The board usually selects the study method to be used: consensus (where agreement is reached using League responses to specific questions) or concurrence (where agreement or a vote on a pre-stated position is required). The technique most often used in the League for reaching member agreement is consensus by group discussion. It is not a simple majority, nor is it unanimity; rather it is the overall sense of the group as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions, whether in a meeting of the full membership or a series of smaller discussion meetings.

Formulating and Adopting a Position. A League's position reflects membership understanding and agreement on a particular public policy issue. In formulating a position, either prior to seeking member agreement through concurrence or following member agreement through consensus, the board must keep in mind the importance of wording the position in terms broad enough to enable the League to initiate, support or oppose a variety of specific legislative and executive proposals over a period of time.

Determining whether consensus has been achieved and how it should be expressed is the responsibility of the board. Through an interpretive process, the board first evaluates the reports of member views and then determines the broad areas of agreement and disagreement that emerge.

Once a League board has finalized a position on an issue, it is announced to members and can be shared with the public. It becomes part of the League's position statements, and the board can begin taking action on it immediately.

Note however: A local League's views during a regional, state or national study do not constitute a final League position and should not be publicized, either to members or to the public. In this case, each local board's responsibility is to report its members' areas of agreement and its level of member participation to the regional, state or national board. In turn, the appropriate board analyzes the member agreement reports from local Leagues, develops a position statement that reflects member thinking and announces the position to members and the public. That position is then available immediately to be used as the basis for action.

Paula L. Schwach

League Sponsors Essay Contest for High School Seniors

The League of Women Voters of Johnson County is encouraging the active participation of 18-year-old voters and their senior classmates by continuing the League's annual essay contest for high school seniors. The League will award a \$1,000 scholarship to the writer of the winning essay. (*The scholarship will be sent to the school of the student's choice.*) The 500-word essay must address the question: If redistricting is the art of selecting voters for candidates, why is it still vital to vote?

We are excited about the prospect of engaging young adults in critical thinking about the importance of the right to vote, how our democracy works and how best to preserve it.

Information was sent to Johnson County school districts. The deadline for essay entries is February 17, 2012. We will invite the winner to read the winning essay at our annual Make Democracy Work Awards Program on May 5, 2012.

Paula Schwach

Naturalization Ceremonies

Naturalization Ceremonies are held at the Federal Courthouse in KCK at 5th and State usually on the last Friday of every month. The ceremony begins at 1:30 p.m. and lasts about 45 minutes. We then register the new citizens to vote, which takes about an hour. If you would like to attend and participate in this moving event, please contact Virginia Johnson at (770-757-2136 or johnson.virginia@yahoo.com). Please mark your calendar for the upcoming Naturalization Ceremonies.

- January 27 Magistrate Judge Gerald L. Rushfelt
- February 24 Magistrate Judge James P. O'Hara
- March 30 Judge Carlos Murguia
- April 27 Chief Judge Kathryn Vratil

The December 16 Naturalization Ceremony had 86 applicants from 34 countries with 56 registering to vote.

Virginia Johnson

Membership

Happy New Year all LWVJCers! It looks like we'll have more great programs next year to keep our members interested and involved. Our membership contributed really great ideas for next year.

Look for our new members at our meetings and events and don't be shy. Introduce yourselves to them. Our new members (from last spring to current) have the jewel added to their nametags. They should be easy to spot. Some of our new members are Melissa Carlson, Pat Circle, Donna Clark, Dawn Elliott, Suzann Geringer, Elaine Hanson, Milli Hogins, Carrie Jenkins, Gary Marsh, Lougene Marsh, Mary Meeks, Julia Morphew, Marion O'Neill, Donna Owens, Ann Phillips, Sharon Pierson, Jill Quigley, Pamelyn Richardson, Joan Sherman, Merrily Shultz, Carolyn Taylor, Carol Wadsworth, Karen Wulfkuhle, and Tami Zillig. Gladly, some of these newer members have already jumped in and are involved with our League.

Keep the new member referrals coming. Everyone is doing a great job of bringing in new members. Thank you.

Nancy Gatz and Susan Horst

Great Decisions

Reminder: The International Relations Committee will again host a Great Decisions discussion group beginning February 6, 2012. The group will meet twice a month (first and third Mondays), February through May, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Oak Park Library.

Great Decisions is a program sponsored by the Foreign Policy Association to engage citizens in discussions of foreign policy issues. Topics for 2012 include:

- MIDDLE EAST REALIGNMENT
- PROMOTING DEMOCRACY
- MEXICO
- CYBER SECURITY
- EXIT FROM AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ
- STATE OF THE OCEANS
- INDONESIA
- ENERGY GEOPOLITICS

The Great Decisions Discussion Book may be ordered now from the International Relations Council on their website (<http://www.irckc.org>) or by phone (816-221-4204). Cost is \$18 if picked up at the IRC office, 911 Main St, KCMO, or \$21 delivered. If you are interested in joining the group or want more information, contact Nan Wilson.

Nan Wilson

International Relations Committee

Join the International Relations Committee to discuss current events every second Monday through May from 2-3 p.m. at the Central Resource Library. The dates are: February 13, March 12, April 9, and May 14. Feel free to bring an article to share!

Kari Sime

Member Spotlight: Bob and Nancy Jefferis

Bob and Nancy Jefferis will celebrate their 60th anniversary next summer—a partnership in marriage, work and volunteer activities that’s going strong today.

They have four grown children, five grandchildren and one great grandchild. Oldest son Brinton lives in Kansas City, Kansas; daughter Laura and family in El Paso, Texas; Neal and family in Virginia; Curtis and family in Hutchison, Kansas.



Photo by Joan Sherman

Bob attended the University of Missouri and Nancy attended Stephens College. Today they remain ardent Tigers fans. Bob’s degree was in Electrical Engineering and his job took the couple from St. Louis County to Winfield, Kansas, and then to their present home in Shawnee 32 years ago. Nancy finished her Bachelor’s at Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas, and her Master’s at Wichita State University. She had a contract teaching in Winfield and continues to substitute teach in Johnson County.

Bob started his business in Shawnee as a manufacturer’s rep, and Nancy worked with him in the office. They handled technical equipment for heating and cooling and have sold two brands used in the White House.

After moving here in 1978, Nancy chose to become involved with the LWVJC. She met with a group at Carol Sader’s home and soon joined the League which was studying taxation. Before long she agreed to serve on the board as Natural Resources Chairperson. Just one month later the issue arose about hazardous waste in Wyandotte County. With less than six months as a League member, Nancy was serving on the state committee involved in a two year study. The study and consensus questions involved the generation, transportation and disposal of hazardous waste. The League promoted recycling and reusing.

Nancy says, “Problems do not go away. New members are entitled to information and the reasons for revisiting issues.”

In 1993, Nancy chaired the committee to study Johnson County Community College. The college was growing rapidly and more space was needed. The question was: Does the college continue its “pay as you go” policy or sell bonds, paying for the college as they build it.

Other League positions which Nancy has held include Johnson County League Secretary and President, State Board for two years and Observer Corps for two years. She says, “President-elect is a crucial job. You really need to get involved. Having a good foundation as President-elect makes the job of President much more effective.”

While Nancy was President, LWVJC needed a fund raising project. Because Nancy and Bob have always been “a team,” she shared that need with him. Bob had served five years as Certified Energy Manager for the Association of Energy Engineers and worked with the Metropolitan Energy Center. Consequently, Nancy and Bob proposed the League should sell sub-compact fluorescent light bulbs as a money maker. It was a success.

When asked why Bob joined the League, he replied with a smile, “I’m married to her.” He has been in charge of the sound equipment for the League for three years, just recently retiring from that position.

Bob and Nancy have volunteered together at the Kansas City Symphony for 14 – 15 years and now serve at the new Kaufmann Center for Performing Arts. Both volunteer for the Theater League, the opera and ballet.

Bob has served 825 volunteer hours at the Union Station. He has worked at the Information Booth and with the Kansas City Rail Experience Museum. He is secretary of the Kansas City Chapter of National Railway Historical Society and editor of its newsletter. Today this team of two maintains family memberships in the League of Women Voters and National Railway Historical Society.

Nancy says, “Many challenges for the LWV continue today. We have lost compromise as the core of democracy. The League is a place where people with different points of view can have a civil conversation. Everyone is accepting to listen to one another. The political process is a continuum. It’s very important that the League can have these discussions.”

Bob agrees, “The LWV is a worthwhile organization. It points people toward participating in government, and we desperately need that.”

Polly Swafford

2012 LEAGUE DAY at the CAPITOL

FEBRUARY 15, 2012

8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

**KANSAS BAR ASSOCIATION BLDG
1200 SW Harrison, Topeka KS 66612**

- 8:30 Registration, Rolls and Coffee or Tea
9:00 League Day Welcome and Session I on impacts of governor's tax and funding proposals.
10:00 Break
10:15 Session II with LWVK legislative expert, Paul Johnson updates on legislative goings-on.
11:15 Lunch with a presenter on one of the HOT ISSUES. (Kansas Action for Children invited)
12:30 Organizing for Action. How to do ADVOCACY
2:30 Adjournment (LWVK Board Meeting following)

Reservations due by February 10.

Mail Checks to: LWVK, PO Box 2366, Topeka Ks. 66601

Local League name _____

Payment Check(s) Amount \$25 each x number _____

PARTICIPANT _____

Mark Your Calendar

Johnson County League will sponsor an informational forum "Privatization of Government Services, For the Common Good or Not?" on March 8 (note date change) at 7 p.m. at Oak Park Library, 9500 Bluejacket. The speakers will be:

- Judy Ancel, Director of Institute for Labor Studies, UMKC
- David Stokes, Show Me Institute, St. Louis

Co-sponsors are the League of Women Voters of Jackson, Clay, Cass, and Platte Counties.

Diane Kuhn

Making Democracy Work Award

The League of Women Voters invites you to nominate an outstanding community leader for our annual Making Democracy Work Award. The League celebrates leaders who have envisioned a way to improve our community and who have mobilized others to work collaboratively to affect positive change. The Making Democracy Work Award will honor one such individual who has, in the League tradition, helped make our local governments strong, vibrant, fair and responsive to the needs of all members of our community.

Nominations are open to any individual who has been a vital part of the work force and who has contributed to our community in a meaningful way. Nominees may be nominated by a friend or colleague, or the nominees can apply themselves. A nomination form is posted on our website (www.LWVjoco.wordpress.com) and in the January VOTER. Please note the deadline for nominations is February 1, 2012.

The winner will be presented at our Johnson County League of Women Voters' Annual Meeting on May 5, 2012. Please note that the winner must be available to receive the award on May 5. We believe that there is no greater tribute that we can make than to honor a leader who continues to demonstrate commitment, leadership and a passion for civic improvement.

Carisa de Anda

Modernizing Seven Natural Resources Positions

With board approval and input from veteran LWVJC members as well as community experts, the Natural Resources Committee embarked on an informal modernizing of its seven positions as well as identifying gaps. Many thanks to Sheri Potter, Myrna Stringer, Ed and Lee Rowe, Annabeth Surbaugh, Janis McMillen and Harriet Duff for their advice and counsel!

Tips to speed review of the draft statements:

- √ Format. The Committee used the format employed by LWVUS for its Environmental Protection and Pollution Control position. It starts with a “support” statement, proceeds to a “believe” statement, and finishes up with a more detailed “support” statement. Each concludes with a “history” statement.
- √ Outcomes only. Only the proposed draft language is given, to save VOTER space. For a detailed discussion of the “why, who and what” that includes the original position statement, our research, experts consulted, and outcomes, visit the LWVJC website at <http://lwvjoco.wordpress.com>.
- √ Discussion. These draft suggestions will be discussed at two meetings: 2/14, Tuesday, 2-5 p.m. with a repeat session on 2/16, Thursday, 6:00-8:45 p.m. Both are at the Central Library’s Carmack Room. The revised version will go to the board on March 3.

Position 1. Land Use: County-wide Land Use Plan and Governing Structure Recommend that this position AND Position 3, Land Use: Arterial Road System, be combined with a future study on mass transportation per discussion at 1/7/12 program planning meeting. Therefore this position stays the same.

History. Approved 1994.

Position 2. Land Use: Sunflower Army Ammunition Site Statement of position: The League of Women Voters of Johnson County supports the redevelopment of the Sunflower Army Ammunition Site so that it protects human health and the environment during the cleanup and in the future.

The League believes that the Sunflower Army Ammunition Site can be redeveloped in a sustainable way that addresses social, economic and environmental concerns both locally and regionally.

The League supports:

- Planning Process:
 - that Johnson County have jurisdiction (land use/zoning) over any redevelopment at the Sunflower Army Ammunition site
 - that there be significant and broad-based input into the planning process for future development of the Sunflower site, to include non-governmental, community-based organizations
 - that financial incentives be considered only on a case-by-case basis and only if schools are not negatively impacted (the League is reluctant to support tax incentives, given the attractiveness of the location)
- Remediation:
 - that there be a guarantee for remediation of the site to the highest level (residential use standard)
 - that remediation work should be protective of air and water quality for humans and wildlife, both on and off the site
 - that there be preservation of all undisturbed and uncontaminated areas of the site as natural wildlands, with public access but only minimal development
- Environmentally Sensitive Redevelopment: The League supports environmentally sensitive redevelopment of the disturbed Sunflower Property including, but not limited to:
 - restoration of native landscapes, where possible
 - preservation of riparian corridors
 - maximization of green space/natural wild-lands for public use (with no organized recreation)
 - conservation of water by recycling, xeriscaping, storm water retention ponds, etc
 - minimization of waste
 - protection of air quality by development of public transit accessibility on the K-10 corridor
 - utilization of energy-efficient and environmentally friendly building designs and renewable energy sources

History. Past studies: 2002-3; Approved: no date available; Modernized: 2012

2012 suggestion. Once remediation recommences after the 2011 hiatus due to funding problems, monitor especially the 2000 acres of the property to be deeded to JCPRD Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department for public use when the clean up is complete.

Position 3. Land Use: Arterial Road System Recommend that this position AND Position 1, Land Use: County-wide Land Use Plan and Governing Structure, be combined with a future study on mass transportation per discussion at 1/7/12 program planning meeting. Therefore this position stays the same.

History. Past Study 1971; approved 1994.

Position 4. Land Use: Park System Statement of position: The League of Women Voters of Johnson County supports an adequate, accessible, affordable and sustainable countywide park and recreation system.

The League of Women Voters believes in ongoing evaluation of park, open space and recreation needs in Johnson County based on national standards (eg., 10 percent of land area dedicated to green space) and of methods of acquisition of open space.

The League of Women Voters supports:

1. Acquisition of additional park land with special attention to open spaces with minimum development and to connectivity to existing park land for regional trail development.
2. Coordinated and cooperative planning for park needs by the county and the cities with citizen input.
3. Municipal responsibility for acquisition of neighborhood parks (larger cities should also acquire community-size parks).
4. County responsibility for large parks with a priority on acquisition of additional park land.
5. County responsibility for recreation programs, financed through a combination of user fees and local taxes. However, the cities should continue to provide those recreation programs which use municipal facilities such as for swimming and tennis.
6. Development of several small indoor recreation centers, geographically accessible to the users. School facilities should continue to be used.
7. Use of a variety of methods of financing acquisition of additional park land including annually budgeted funds, bonds, donations and gifts, federal grants, and mandatory dedication to require developers to donate land for parks to serve new subdivisions.
8. Use of a variety of public education methods about facilities and opportunities.

History. Past studies: 1971, 1977. Approved: 1994, 1999 retain as written. Modernized: 2012

2012 suggestion. Modernize the LWVJC position entitled “Local Government: County Governing Boards” by changing the parks board name to Johnson County Park and Recreation District, the name designated by State statute.

Position 5. Solid Waste Management: Solid Waste Disposal. Statement of position: The League of Women Voters of Johnson County supports long term planning and funding for adequate and affordable solid waste management systems within the county.

The League of Women Voters believes that “reducing, reusing and recycling” solid wastes are critical to conserving resources, lowering energy needs and protecting the environment.

The League supports:

1. Oversight of all solid waste operations by the County
2. Solid waste plans which encourage waste reduction
3. Consistency of services county-wide
4. Reasonable equity in costs for waste management
5. Planning that coordinates with regional solid waste management efforts and includes public input and regular information to the public
6. Ongoing public education about best practices by consumers and commercial entities.

History. Approved: 1971; 1999 retain as modified. Modernized: 2012

Positions 6 and 7 combined. 6 = Water: Water Management Policy; 7 = Water: Sewers.

New name: Water Strategies Policy.

The League of Women Voters of Johnson County supports protecting the public health and promoting economic development through a cooperative framework by which the legally appropriate entities provide Johnson County’s residents with safe drinking water, wastewater handling, and stormwater management while safeguarding the environment.

The county’s legally appropriate water entities and their strategic plans are:

√ *Drinking water* – The largest utility is WaterOne. Go to <http://www.waterone.org/Adobe%20Files/2011StrategicPlanningBro.pdf>. Others are City of Olathe (<http://www.planolathe.org/element/utility-services>); Rural Water District 7 (see its 2011 Water Quality Report at http://www.rwd7.com/2011_CCR.pdf); and Consolidated RWD 6 (not on the Internet).

√ *Wastewater handling* -- Johnson County Wastewater for those on, or desiring to join, the Consolidated Main Sewer District. Charter Resolution 29-92 (<http://www.jcw.org/auresolutions/CharterResolution29-92Version2008Final.pdf>) set forth policies, procedures, costs and appeals concerning the Consolidated Wastewater District. See also its 2005 Strategic Business Asset Management Plan at <http://www.jcw.org/pdf/auannualpdf/ExecutiveSummaryFINALSBP.pdf>.

Other entities providing wastewater services are Olathe, Gardner, Edgerton, Spring Hill and DeSoto. For those on or desiring septic systems, the Johnson County Environmental Division is responsible. For various septic regulations and information, select the category “onsite sewage” at

http://jced.jocogov.org/doclibrary?field_division_value_many_to_one=os+&tid=All

√ *Stormwater management* – Part of the county’s Public Works Department, this program works closely with the individual municipalities, KDHE and others. For an overview, go to <http://stormwater.jocogov.org/HelpfulLinks.shtml> and then select Stormwater Management Program Business Plan Summary Report. For the 2003 Stormwater Management Program Policy go to <http://stormwater.jocogov.org/AboutSMP/documents/FINALSMPPolicy20030918.pdf>

√ *Unincorporated Johnson County* -- The Department of Planning and Development creates zoning and other regulations that affect waterways, riparian zones and water quality. See its Rural Comprehensive Plan at http://planning.jocogov.org/Rural%20Comp%20Plan/Handout_Excerpt%20BOCC%20OKd.pdf

The League believes that Johnson County’s legally appropriate entities listed immediately above must assure that the following values govern their work:

- Equity of service and costs (pay for what you use or benefit from)
- Sustainability (technically doable and financially affordable for the next 20-30 years)
- Payment flexibility for at-risk families and groups (e.g., individualized pay plans; some “scholarship” funds)
- Ongoing diverse communications with customers and the public (e.g., the internet, social media, targeted mailings, traditional media)
- Ongoing education of customers and the public (diverse methods and media, all ages)
- Cooperative relationships (e.g., with governmental units, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders)
- Congruency with county-wide plans concerning natural resources, land use and development (especially *Vision 2030’s* sections entitled “Sustainable pattern of development and redevelopment;” “Culturally rich and active community;” and its appendices on Parks and Recreation; Land Use; Other Infrastructure; and Natural Resources and Environment. Go to <http://jocovision2030.com/>)

The League supports these management criteria for the above legally appropriate water entities:

- Meeting or exceeding all national/state/local standards on quality, and meeting all regulations concerning controls, tests, audits, enforcement and penalties;
- Use of nationally known best management practices;
- Fees/rates cover true costs of service;
- Full public disclosure of financial and quality data and findings;
- User input about service, cost-benefits and future plans; and
- Incentives for and recognition of cooperative efforts

History. “Water: Water Management Policy.” Approved and updated 1975; updated 1980s. “Water: Sewers.” Approved February, 1981; updated April 1992. Modernized and combined in 2012. Gap addressed in 2012 Modernization: Stormwater management.

--Elaine Giessel and Ellen Miller

Kansas League Offers Forum

You are invited to attend a forum on “Key Issues for the 2012 Legislative Session.” The event will be held at the Topeka/Shawnee County Public Library, Marvin Auditorium, 1515 Southwest 10th Avenue, Topeka, KS on Tuesday, January 31 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Subjects for discussion: Redistricting in KS, 2012 Election, Social Services Issues, Arts Funding, and Education.

Panel members

Kansas Senate President Steve Morris
House Minority Leader Paul Davis
Representative Brenda Landwher
Senator Laura Kelly

Journalist Martin Hawver
KU Professor Mike Lynch
KU Professor Charles Jones (moderator)

The event will be free and open to the public. Co-Sponsors include: KU’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Kansas League of Women Voters, Shawnee County Legislative Delegation, Topeka/Shawnee County Public Library, and WIBW TV.

Who Pays?

2011-2013 Re-study of the League's Position on State Finance

In Kansas, as in our nation today, taxes are a hot topic. We are in the midst of a financial crisis, the likes of which the country and our state hasn't seen since the Great Depression of 1930's. Revenue shortfalls threaten basic infrastructure and services at all levels of government.

At the League of Women Voters of Kansas (LWVK) 2011 Annual Meeting in Emporia Kansas, members of the League concluded that it is time to re-study the Position Statement on Kansas State Finance. This Position was last reviewed and adopted in 1993. The position statement is: *The LWVK supports a broad-based state tax system that has diverse sources of revenue and is equitable, provides adequate revenue, and is effectively and economically administered.*

Much has changed since 1993. Some tax experts believe the balance described in the 1993 position statement has been lost. Current proposed tax changes for our state include increased tax exemptions for business and corporations, and elimination of corporate and individual income taxes. In order to evaluate these proposals and make a meaningful contribution to the policy debate, we must educate ourselves on the current tax structure and the implications of proposed changes.

One of the study team's first actions was to post information on www.lwvk.org under a link titled, Kansas Taxes: Who Pays? Topics include: Educating Ourselves, The Kansas State Constitution on Tax Policy, 2011 Proposed Amendment of the State's Tax Policy on Income Tax, and Links to Background Documents and Information. Continue to check this website for updates.

OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS

Olathe School Board January 5 meeting

- The Board heard a report on the 2011-2012 capital outlay priorities. The Board had previously adopted a maximum budget of \$13,000,000 capital outlay expenditures for the 2011-12 fiscal year. The priorities focused on technology purchases and the scheduling of summer maintenance projects (many deferred from past years).
- Authorized the district to enter into negotiations with SunGard for an upgrade to the software used by financial, human resources, and payroll personnel. SunGard did not submit the lowest bid, but their software has the best functionality for district needs and will require less customization than that of other bidders.
- Approved bids from Riverside Technologies, Inc. for HP computers, monitors, and laptops, and a bid from WayTech, Inc. for one gigabit memory sticks.
- The Board approved a clarification of the procedure for Student Suspension/Expulsion Appeal Hearing. The Board will continue to hold hearings themselves, rather than appointing an appeal officer.

Connie Richards

Johnson County WaterOne Board January 10 meeting (www.waterone.org)

- Good year-end financial news. Water sales in 2011 totaled \$50 million, up by 2.6 percent over 2010's sales. Over the year, developers added 685 new service connections vs. the 500 projected.
- Competitor's misleading ads. Recently, ads have cited out-of-date Water One regulations as part of a campaign urging customers to buy its insurance in case of a water service line problem. American Water Resources wasn't selected as the "vendor of choice" by Water One, but still ran misleading ads in the *Kansas City Star*. After complaints by WaterOne's attorney, the company's website was modified. Tip: If you want water service line insurance, watch your mailbox – you'll be getting the correct information later this month. For the facts, go to <http://www.waterone.org/index.htm>.

Ellen Miller

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) January 5 meeting

- The County recently offered an early retirement incentive to its employees, and as a result, approximately 350 positions are currently vacant, not all of which will be filled.
- The County has made a decision to discontinue its Food Service Inspection activity. This has been done through a contract with the State (Kansas Department of Agriculture, KDA), in which some of the inspectors were paid by the state, and the county provided an additional \$148,000/year subsidy to KDA to support county employees to conduct inspections. The decision to pull the county out of the food inspection service was based on the fact that KDA has been voiding contracts with counties over the past few years, leaving some uncertainty about how long these contracts would continue. Currently, only Johnson and Sedgwick counties are still under contract. In addition, Cindy Kemper, League member and Head of the County's Environmental Department, is taking early retirement. The county will begin a transition of this department with a re-focus of its environmental activities. It is anticipated that by the end of March, the transition will be complete.
- A recent audit of Johnson County Transit, triggered in part by anticipated staff reductions resulting from the early retirement incentive, indicated two main areas of focus: eliminating fraud vulnerabilities when dealing with cash collections on the buses, and shortening the time from cash collections to deposits in the bank. Some of this will be facilitated by moving more quickly to an automated system, better documentation of procedures for handling cash, and increasing the number of people involved in handling the cash.
- The Board and Staff are beginning their Strategic Program Area Reviews for this year. The meetings are held in the lower level of the County Ad Bldg, and are open to the public.

General Government/Administration 10:30 am – 12 p.m.: Jan. 26, Mar. 22, May 24, Aug 23, Oct. 25.

Human Services 1 - 2:30 p.m.: Jan. 26, Mar. 22, May 24, Aug 23, Oct. 25.

Infrastructure 10:30 - 12 p.m.: Feb. 23, Apr 19, Jul 26, Sept. 27, Nov. 29

Public Safety 1 - 2:30 p.m.: Feb. 23, Apr 19, Jul 26, Sept. 27, Nov. 29

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) January 12 meeting

- Lobbyist Stuart Little presented the County's legislative agenda. Much of it focuses on the reorganization of various state government agencies and the subsequent impact on County government.
- The State's Medicaid services will be provided now via managed care/private companies. Three vendors will be selected and Medicaid consumers will have a choice of three plans. The new system will emphasize coordinated care, health homes, and savings through efficiencies.
- The county will be supporting: 1) allowing official publications to be on the County's website; 2) amending some construction laws to allow emergency repairs to bridges; 3) more timely production of evidence during home appraisal hearings; and 4) repealing changes to platting and taxing of newly developed land.

Janis McMillen

Unified Government of Wyandotte County December 15 meeting

- One item involved a redevelopment project for the corner of 99th St. and Parallel Avenue that involves two automobile dealership pad sites and one convenience store pad site. The project will create about 105 new jobs. The agreement calls for a rebate of the UG's share of the property tax (46 percent) and 0.9 rebate of new sales tax generated (35 percent) for each dealership on a ten year term. No incentives were offered for the convenience store site. The resolution determining the intent of the UG to issue industrial revenue bonds for this was a part of this item. One dealership has been confirmed.
- Another item was a public hearing/resolution determining the intent of the UG to issue industrial revenue bonds in the amount of approximately \$6,500,000 for Associated Wholesale Grocers, Inc. They propose to build a 35,000 sq. foot office expansion at the facility located at 5000 Kansas Ave. and then move 92 employees from another office facility outside of Kansas City, KS. Project qualifies under the UG Tax Abatement Policy and 10 year PILOT schedule.

Unified Government of Wyandotte County January 5 meeting

- On the Non Planning Consent Agenda, all seven items were approved, which included an agreement with New West Presentations to operate Sandstone Amphitheater for a one year with three single year options to renew.

Marilyn Bynum and Pat Yingst

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF JOHNSON COUNTY
9531 MEADOW LANE
LEAWOOD KS 66206**

Upcoming Events

Saturday February 4	General Meeting: "Health Care: Affordable Care Act" 8:30 a.m. social time, 9 a.m. program, 11 a.m. board meeting; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS
Monday February 6	Great Decisions Discussion: Topic: Middle East Realignment; 7 – 8:30 p.m.; Oak Park Library, 9500 Bluejacket, Overland Park, KS
Monday February 13	International Relations Committee: Discussion of current events; 2-3 p.m.; Central Resource Library, 9875 West 87 th Street, Overland Park, KS
Tuesday February 14	Discussion: Modernizing Natural Resources Positions; 2-5 p.m.; Carmack Room, Central Resource Library, 9875 West 87 th Street, Overland Park, KS
Wednesday February 15	League Day at the Capitol: 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.; Kansas Bar Association Building, 1200 SW Harrison, Topeka, KS.
Thursday February 16	Discussion: Modernizing Natural Resources Positions; 6-8:45 p.m.; Carmack Room, Central Resource Library, 9875 West 87 th Street, Overland Park, KS
Monday February 20	Great Decisions Discussion: Topic: Promoting Democracy; 7 – 8:30 p.m.; Oak Park Library, 9500 Bluejacket, Overland Park, KS
Friday February 24	Naturalization Ceremony: Register new voters; 1:30 p.m.; Federal Courthouse, 5th and State, Kansas City, KS
Saturday March 3	General Meeting: "Social Security" 8:30 a.m. social time, 9 a.m. program, 11 a.m. board meeting; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS
Monday March 5	Great Decisions Discussion: Topic: Mexico; 7 – 8:30 p.m.; Oak Park Library, 9500 Bluejacket, Overland Park, KS
Thursday March 8	LWV Forum: "Privatization of Government Services – For the Common Good or Not?" 7 p.m.; Oak Park Library, 9500 Bluejacket, Overland Park, KS

The deadline for the March VOTER is February 15.