



VOTER

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Johnson County

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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, October 1 Meeting

Atonement Lutheran Church - 9948 Metcalf

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

Democracy on Trial: Laws, Lawsuits and the "Little Man"

Professor Burdett Loomis, PhD., University of Kansas and Diane Kuhn, former Kansas League President, will provide perspectives, insights, and thought-provoking commentary on challenges to our cherished beliefs that each citizen should be afforded an equal political voice in a democratic government that is responsive to the needs of everyone, including the "Little Man."

We look forward to your attendance and participation in this stimulating forum.



National Education Study



To prepare for Consensus Meetings, study pages 5, 6, 7



President's Message

"Flying the flag"... It's a phrase often associated with patriotism, but actually, it means a lot more. There was a time before our modern communications when a national flag was an important statement of who you stood for -- especially for ship's crews who depended upon identifying threats or allies from as far away as possible. Flying the flag was the way you were identified and the way you made your presence known. A well-known example started in 1907 when Theodore Roosevelt sent United States' battleships around the world as the Great White Fleet. It had a friendly mission to tell the world that the United States was a nation that deserved attention. There was no other purpose than to "fly the flag."

So what does that have to do with us? The League of Women Voters "flies the flag" every time one of us is present at a meeting in the community or writes to a newspaper editor or contacts a legislator. We let people know that we are watching and that we care. We let others know that we represent the voter and we say that we are a force to be reckoned with.

Standing on the steps of the Polsky Theater waiting for the doors to open before the September 2 public hearing about congressional redistricting, the thought of "flying the flag" passed through my mind. I was joined by Paula Schwach, Ann Etter, Missy Taylor, and Delores Furtado. We were there to say that the League of Women Voters had a stake in this issue. Delores presented a statement from the Kansas League calling for transparency in the redistricting process. Did being there matter? Who knows. But, we were there "flying the flag," identifying ourselves as League of Women Voters members and citizens concerned that the right to vote is protected.

Very soon, we will have another chance to represent the League of Women Voter's. **There will be a public hearing on proposals by the Johnson County Charter Commission on Tuesday, September 27th, 7 p.m., at the Sylvester Powell Community Center, 6200 Martway, Mission.** Every ten years, a Charter Commission meets to review how Johnson County governs itself. The new recommendations that are to be put forward could make marked changes for the 2012 election. Some of the proposals being considered include returning to partisan elections of County Commissioners and allowing voters to repeal sales taxes and remove city managers. The League has actively supported non-partisan elections in the past and has always had a concern for appropriate governance. **A strong showing from our membership for this key meeting will be important!**

Many of you are out in the community every month as observers, as voter registrars, as participants in community events. You, too, represent the voter and the rights of our citizens. I applaud your work and persistence. Keep flying the flag. In the end, it will indeed make a difference.

Harriet Duff

Board Briefs September 10 meeting

- Susan Horst, Membership Co-chair, announced that JCLWV now has 130 members.
- The board approved a proposal by Ellen Miller and Elaine Giessel that they conduct a "streamlining" of seven Natural Resources positions to bring them up to modern status. They plan to report preliminary findings to members in January and final recommendations at the Annual Meeting in May, 2012.
- The board welcomed Carol Wadsworth as the new web site manager.
- Janis McMillan is the LWVUS leader of the national study on privatization. For JoCo LWV to participate in this study, someone will need to step forward to serve as chairperson.
- Volunteers also needed include a chairperson for the International Committee and more members for the Johnson County Voters registration. Treasurer Candy Birch announced the need for a CPA to audit the League books.
- The board approved \$20 registration fee for the 10th Annual Community Forum sponsored by the Prairie Village Environmental Committee and the Kansas Natural Resource Council. Elaine Giessel will be in charge of the League's booth on Oct. 6 at 5:30 p.m. at the Village Presbyterian Church.
- President Harriet Duff announced the Kansans United in Voice and Spirit Rally in Topeka on September 16,

Polly Swafford

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 you calendar for the upcoming Naturalization Ceremonies.

- September 29* Magistrate Judge David J. Waxse
- September 30 Judge Carlos Murguia
- October 28 Magistrate Judge David J. Waxse
- November 18** Judge James P. O'Hara
- December 16** Judge John W. Lundstrum

**Because of the number of applicants for naturalization, an additional ceremony is scheduled in September.*

***Due to the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays, the ceremonies will be held earlier in the month.*

The August 26 Naturalization Ceremony had 89 applicants from 38 countries with 38 registering to vote.

Virginia Johnson

Voter Service

The committee for the Voter Service project met with Election Commissioner Brian Newby to learn about new and future changes to Voter Registration. As well as concentrating on the upcoming changes at the polls, we sought information for our Naturalization Committee on what they might experience in future registration of new citizens. The two key changes are 1) beginning in 2012, every voter must show photo I.D. when voting and 2) beginning in 2013 individuals must provide proof of U.S. citizenship when they register to vote for the first time. There are several other key changes but none that affect all voters.

The Voter Service committee will meet to plan several voter registration events for the upcoming months. At the October League meeting, we will ask for volunteers to assist with these functions. We look forward to events where new members can interact with our long-time members to put the League in the public's eye as a "go-to" organization for voting information.

Harriett Anderson

Helpful Websites

For people hoping to keep what is good in the Patient Protection Affordable Care Act (usually referred to as ACA), here are some websites for answers to questions about the law:

<http://www.healthcare.gov> This is the Health and Human Services (HHS) site. I find it easy to use.

<http://www.Politifact.com> PolitiFact is a project of the St. Petersburg Times to help you find the truth in politics.

<http://www.mediamatters.com> Media Matters for America is a Web-based, not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) progressive research and information center dedicated to comprehensively monitoring, analyzing, and correcting conservative misinformation in the U.S. media.

<http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/> Publication of the Kaiser Family Foundation

<http://www.reformreality.org> Publication of the Health Care Foundation of Greater K.C.

<http://www.familiesusa.org/health-reform-central/> Families USA is a national nonprofit, non-partisan organization dedicated to the achievement of high-quality, affordable health care for all Americans.

Frank Neff

Let's Talk Issues

Let's Talk Issues is a public service program co-sponsored by JCCC, *The Kansas City Star* and the League of Women Voters of Johnson County. Programs are presented six times a year, three in the fall and three in the spring.

Let's Talk Issues programs are taped in the JCCC TV Studio. The September 7 program focused on "Changes in Topeka." For the October 5 program, the panel's topic is "Health Care: Who Pays the Bill Now and in the Future." Dolores Furtado will serve as moderator.

Previous programs may be accessed through the college website: www.jccc.edu. Click on Library and Technology, then scroll down to Software and Online Resources, click JCCC Videos, then select **Let's Talk Issues**.

Ann Etter

Membership

Our LWVJC enjoyed the August 18 Preview Party held at the Matt Ross Community Center. We had a good turn-out of members and prospective members. After introductions of members and guests, Ann Sanders presented a preview of the timely and interesting 2011-2012 program topics.

This year we have 16 new members. The new members will be wearing a special name-tag, so you will know to whom to give a special welcome.

We have 130 members, which includes nine Lifetime Members. We would like to give a special thank you to our Supporting and Sustaining Members and to those who have donated to the Education Fund.

*Nancy Gatz and Susan Horst
LWVJC Membership Co-Chairs*

Need to contact us? Send messages to: LWVJoCo@yahoo.com



October Consensus Meetings are Coming Fast!

Pencil In Dates on your Calendar Today!

All Education Study consensus meetings will be in the Central Resource Library's Carmack Room. Get prepared via five summaries in the VOTER July/August (2), September (2), and October (1) issues.

Questions 1-9

Topics: History, Common Core Standards
October 4, Tuesday, 7-9 p.m.
(repeat) 10/24, Monday, 7-9 p.m.

Questions 10-15

Topics: Equity and Funding
October 26, Wednesday, 7-9 p.m.
(repeat) 10/27, Thursday, 7-9 p.m.

“The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education: Equity and Funding”

[Note: This is the fifth and final VOTER summary of LWVUS documents concerning the Education Study. Please see the August and September VOTER for the other four summaries. All five documents are also being placed on our website.]

“Equity of funding: An attempt to equalize educational opportunities by sharing resources with equal access across schools..” -- LWVUS Leaders’ Guide for the Education Study Consensus, p. 17.

Equity vs. Equality: Equity connotes fairness, rather than equal funding because there is a growing awareness that some students are more expensive to educate than others. Some educators talk about “equity of opportunity” and “opportunity to learn,” ideas that deal with access to what is deemed necessary to have an equal opportunity, opportunities that are often denied children of poverty.” -- LWVUS Leaders’ Guide for the Education Study Consensus, p. 17.

Prior to the 1950s, the federal government had little to do with public education. But since *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) and the *Elementary and Secondary School Act* (1965), much federal legislation has sought to reduce or eliminate inequities in access to, funding of, and providing public education. The inequities included illegal segregation and differences in wealth.

What’s the current impact of federal actions?

- National investment. The US invests 5 percent of annual GDP in K-12 public education.
- Sample costs. In 2011, ESEA’s Title I (low-income) was \$14.6 billion. In 2010, its old Title VI (now Individual with Disabilities Education Act) was \$11.5 billion.
- Carrots/sticks. Federal money adds less than 10 percent to local education budgets, but has many rules on how to use it
- Segregation returns. Today, ¾ of Black and Latino/a students attend schools that are predominately non-white.
- Racial gap grows. 1988 saw the smallest reading score racial differences so far.
- Evaluating teachers. So far, no valid method has emerged to assess teacher effectiveness based on student performance.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). It seeks to close gaps in achievement, especially for minority kids. By 2014, 95 percent of students must meet state reading and math standards. Interestingly, 4th-grade math and 8th-grade reading scores had a higher rate of increase *before* NCLB. Its vouchers let parents remove their child from a non-performing school, then enroll him/her in either a private or public school.

Charter schools. Considered public schools, they get public funding. While some have been very successful, a 2009 study of 2,403 showed that only 17 percent had significantly more growth in test scores than public schools. 37 percent had less.

Research-based recommendations. One researcher, Linda Darling-Hammond, proposes a more equitable public education system including:

- Food and health care, so that children can come to school ready to learn each day
- Equitably funded schools which provide equitable access to high-quality teaching
- Well-prepared and well-supported teachers and leaders
- Standards, curriculum and assessments that focus on 21st-century goals

Please share your comments with us at LWVJoCo@yahoo.com.

Education Study Committee, Ellen Miller

NOTE: LWVUS Education Study Committee members have researched and written background papers to help Leagues educate members and communities about the Role of the Federal Government in Public Education issues.

You will find the complete text at www.lwv.org. Go to “For Members” and from the pull down menu, select “Projects and Programs.” Under “Taskforces & Studies,” click on “The Education Study: The Role of the Federal Government in Public Education.” Then select “Background Paper>>Get Informed.”



Consensus Questions on “The Role of Federal Government in Public Education”



[Note: Questions 1-9 will be discussed at the 10/4 and 10/24 (repeat) consensus meetings.]

General Questions

1. The current role of the federal government in public education is
 Much too small too small about right too large much too large
2. What should be the role of the federal government in public education? (Rank)
 - a. To ensure that all students pre-K-12 receive a quality education.
 - b. To develop accountability measures that will study the progress of all students so that they achieve adequate yearly progress.
 - c. To mandate Common Core Standards for all students K-12.
 - d. To monitor state efforts for funding
 - e. To measure teacher effectiveness through test data.
3. A quality public education is important to perpetuate a strong and viable democracy.
 Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

Common Core Standards

4. Currently the governors and state education officers have developed Common Core Standards that are national but not federal. Should the standards be mandated of the states in order to obtain federal funding? (Choose one)
 - a. Special grant programs such as Race to the Top
 - b. All programs under Elementary and Secondary Education Act where the needs qualify for funding.
 - c. All programs receiving federal funding from any source
 - d. All of the above
 - e. None of the above
5. Should there be a national assessment aligned with the common cores standards?
 Yes No
 If Yes, Should implementation be voluntary or federally mandated? (choose one)
 - a. Voluntary b. Mandated c. Mandated, if fully funded
 If No, what other accountability measures might you suggest? (choose one)
 - a. Continue to allow the states to develop their own assessments.
 - b. Suggest that the local education districts use their own assessments or adopt one that is a nationally norm-referenced assessment such as the *Stanford Achievement Test* or *Iowa Test of Basic Skills*.
 - c. Suggest that districts use a portfolio type of assessment where student projects and activities would be scored holistically
6. National standards should lead to: (choose one)
 - a. A nationally mandated curriculum to be aligned to the national standards and assessments.
 - b. A national curriculum that is only suggested but not mandated.
 - c. A suggested structure for states and local education agencies to develop their own curriculum.
 - d. No national curriculum.
7. What role should the national assessment consortia play in student evaluation? (Rank order)
 - a. Provide an assessment system that is aligned to the Common Core Standards.
 - b. Provide comparison data showing progress toward reaching Common Core Standards.
 - c. Provide criteria for determining readiness for college and careers.
 - d. Provide information to students, parents, teachers and school districts about student achievement.
 - e. Provide diagnostic information on each child.
8. Data from the national assessments are often difficult for parents, teachers and others to understand. If we have a national assessment, what information is most important to be reported to parents, teachers, students and the community? (choose one)
 - a. Data should be “norm referenced” (where students are ranked) for district comparison only.
 - b. Data should be “criterion referenced” and clearly informative so that teachers, parents, and students know how individual students have mastered criteria established at a national level.
 - c. Data should be used to determine “cut” scores knowing if students have mastered requirements for special grade levels.

9. Information from nationally required assessment data should be used to (Choose one):

- a. Sanction schools not measuring up to the specific levels
- b. Reward schools that achieve high scores
- c. Rank teachers based on student test score data
- d. Reward teachers who have exemplary scores
- e. Inform districts how their population compares to others similar to theirs.

[Note: Questions 10-15 will be discussed at the 10/26 and 10/27 (repeat) consensus meetings.]

Funding and Equity

10. In the past most of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding has been non-competitive based on need. All/Any Schools that prove they fall under the federal guidelines for funding receive those funds. However, competitive grants are now being proposed to states/districts who meet certain federal requirements, such as Race to the Top. Which would be appropriate: (choose one)

- a. Non-competitive funding for all applicants meeting requirements
- b. A combination of non-competitive and competitive grants
- c. Competitive grants only
- d. No federal funding

11. If the federal government's role is the concern of the "common good" then: (choose one)

- a. Mandates only should be sanctioned.
- b. Mandates and funding should both be provided.
- c. Funding should be provided through grants only.
- d. A combination of funded mandates and grants should apply.
- e. No mandates should be required and limited grants for innovation available.

12. Equity in public education means equitable access to: (Rank order)

- a. high quality teaching/learning
- b. adequate and current learning materials
- c. clean and well maintained physical facilities
- d. food and health care
- e. safe and secure neighborhoods
- f. secure housing

13. Currently Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funding is considered "categorical" rather than for general use. This means that it can only be used with special populations for special purposes. ESEA should remain targeted toward poverty and special needs.

Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

14. The federal government has a role in supporting early childhood education, birth to 5, for all children?

Strongly agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly disagree

15. Federal support for early childhood education programs (e.g. Head Start, Title I, Special Education, Early Start) should include funding for parent education and support regarding child development, child health and nutrition, and access to other supportive services, such as mental health as needed.

a. Strongly Agree Agree No consensus Disagree Strongly Disagree

b. This funding should be extended to: All children only those with special needs special needs first



Member Spotlight: Ellen Miller

Ask Ellen Miller a question about the library or water issues and watch her eyes light up. Ellen's experience in these divergent fields serves her well today.

When Ellen retired from business in 2008, she researched volunteer organizations and quickly joined the JCLWV. Currently she serves as our Natural Resources Chair, on the Kansas LWV Board of Directors and as a State Coach for the League's Membership and Leadership Development program (MLD). She also volunteers at the National World War I museum.



Ellen grew up in Northeast Kansas City. She received her BA degree from the University of Oregon and her MA in Library Science from University of Illinois.

She and John married 42 years ago during the Vietnam War era. John was drafted and served in the U.S. Army. They lived in Washington, D.C. where Ellen's first job at the Library of Congress involved automation systems. This started her two-fold career path.

After the war, they returned to Kansas City so John could complete his MA degree at UMKC. Ellen worked for the Shawnee Mission School District to help automate the high school library catalogues.

John's job took them to Cincinnati, Ohio. For 12 years, Ellen worked at the University of Cincinnati Computing Center specializing in information and library systems. When they again returned to the KC area, she changed careers to become a consultant working with library boards, city councils, and water district boards. The similarity is that these entities have elected or appointed boards of directors.

Ellen co-founded the Kansas Library Trustees Association and co-chaired the volunteer Committee for Better Library Service for the public, leading the successful voters' campaign to fund the Central Resource Library facility. In 2010 Ellen and three other volunteers received the Johnson County Triple Crown Champion award for serving on all three boards: J.C. Library, Friends of the Library, and J.C. Library Foundation.

These days Ellen and John enjoy being close to their young grandchildren. Ellen's son David Wasby and family live in Atlanta, GA, but daughter Christine Westwater and husband reside in Lenexa and have two little boys. The Millers are proud to serve as "Honorary Grandparents" for three children whose parents are friends of their daughter. Ellen and John enjoy every moment they spend with all these children and plan a special half day outing with one child each week.

As chair of the Natural Resources Committee for the JCLWV, Ellen and Elaine Giessel, previous chair, work as a team. Ellen concentrates on clean water issues and Elaine on the solid waste plan for Johnson County. The board has approved their proposal of an informal, streamlined review of the seven Natural Resources positions by that committee. The goal is to suggest changes that would make them more current and useful, as well as identifying gaps. LWVUS suggests streamlining because "Leagues today may need more focused, flexible and streamlined alternatives to accommodate changing lifestyles and busy schedules." Source: *ABCs for a Streamlined League*, LWVUS, June 2010.

As League's Membership and Leadership Development State Coach, Ellen works with Diane Kuhn as a team. They will conduct teleconference calls with representatives from Manhattan and Great Bend to ascertain their progress in organizing special events, getting increased visibility and membership in the their communities. Ellen and Diane will also make separate in-person visits with those two chapters.

Polly Swafford

Redistricting

At the September 2 public hearing on redistricting, Dolores Furtado spoke on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Kansas. The following testimony was included in her remarks to the Legislative Committee.

For decades, the League of Women Voters has advocated for transparent and accountable redistricting. However, the drawing of Legislative district boundaries and creating new districts continues to be among the least transparent process in American Democracy.

Based on data from the 2010 Census, the number of Kansas Representatives to the U.S. House did not change. However, population growth and shifts within Kansas necessitate the drawing of new district boundaries for our 4 Congressional Districts, State Board of Education, State Senate and State Representative districts.

Advances in technology make it possible for members of the public to map out districts themselves. Kansans should be encouraged to use tools, currently available on the Internet, to create redistricting maps. These citizen generated maps should be compared to the redistricting map generated by this committee. There is much to be gained by involving the public and coalescing behind one plan. Confidence in the process is enhanced. When voters believe they, the voters, freely choose their elected officials, participation in elections happens. However, when officials choose their voters, self-interest and preservation of incumbency take over. Gerrymandering, a consequence of political polarization should also be avoided. The League of Women Voters believes representative democracy thrives when voters are involved.

The League of Women Voters has advocated for transparent and accountable redistricting processes for decades. Holding public hearings throughout the state gives Kansans an opportunity to express their expectations. We urge that disclosure of committee timelines and other important details be made known and include time for public input. The proposed maps must be available for public comment prior to completion by the Legislative Redistricting Committee.

To reiterate, representative democracy depends on preserving the principle that voters choose their elected officials.

Looking forward to 2020, the League of Women Voters supports the creation of an independent Non-partisan Redistricting Commission. Access to comprehensive census data, software for mapping and the computer skills of all people make us confident that a Non-Partisan Redistricting Commission can draw new boundaries using fair and objective criteria. I urge you to recommend this change in advance of the 2020 census.

Dolores Furtado

OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS

Johnson County WaterOne Board September 13 meeting (www.waterone.org)

- Protecting your water line. Homeowners are responsible for paying the repairs of breaks between their house and their water meter; sometimes that can run into hundreds of dollars. Soon, owners may purchase insurance costing about \$3.99/month covering those costs. HomeServeUSA was selected to offer the insurance product to WaterOne's customers; it is prohibited from sharing customer contact information with any other entities. Its current utility clients include California Water, AquaAmerica and Louisville Water.
- Higher returned-check fee. Bad checks will now cost \$25, up from the current \$20. All other fees were left the same.

Ellen Miller

Johnson County Library Board August 17 meeting

- The Library's major programming emphasis for the upcoming year is "Legacies of the Civil War."
- The Board heard the major findings of a Building Systems and Site Assessment of Corinth Library conducted by Clark Enersen Partners. There are a variety of structural and water issues at that Library.
- The Administrative Regulations Manual--the Library Board-approved policies for the Johnson County Library-- is now available in full to the public through the Johnson County Library Web site. The manual can be found at www.jocolibrary.org/libraryboard.
- The JCL co-sponsors a program with the Johnson County Library Foundation and the Court with the Library providing books as part of the Court-Assisted Reading Enhancement (CARE) program. Teens are taking advantage of the program since recently only three books for the 15-18 age group remained in Judge Farley's courtroom. (The supply was replenished!)

Connie Richards

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) September 1 meeting

- The County is instituting a program to provide area firms who have not done business with the county to gain relevant information about the purchasing process as well as offer networking opportunities for these business owners. The county is targeting small, disadvantaged, woman-owned, veteran-owned and minority-owned businesses in the area.
- A reduction in funding the County's Catch-A-Ride program leaves only one paid employee to service the program; this person is supplemented with volunteer support. This program serves home-bound residents who have no access to transportation. Demand has increased for this service, but comparable funding has not increased. Thus rides that are considered "non-essential" have now been discontinued; however, essential trips, such as medical appointments, trips to the pharmacy, etc will continue. In 2011, the number of one way trips/month averaged 454, of which 52 trips were considered "non-essential".

Janis McMillen

Johnson County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)

September 8, 2011 meeting

- The first ever Strategic Program Area Review will take place at the County Administration Building on Thursday October 20. The purpose of the program, among other things, is to provide Commissioners an opportunity to gain a more in-depth understanding of county services (and to perhaps become the Commission "experts" for these services). The meetings are open to the public. Meeting times, location, service area and assigned Commissioners are:

10:30 a.m. Human Services, Room 202/204 Chair, Commissioner Jim Allen and Commissioners Calvin Hayden and Jason Osterhaus

10:30 a.m. General Government & Administration, Room 211 Chair, Commissioner Ed Peterson and Commissioners David Lindstrom and Michael Ashcraft

1:30 p.m. Infrastructure, Room 202/204 Chair, Commissioner David Lindstrom and Commissioners Ed Peterson and Jason Osterhaus

1:30 p.m. Public Safety, Room 211 Chair, Commissioner Calvin Hayden and Commissioner Jim Allen and Michael Ashcraft

Janis McMillen

Shawnee Mission School Board August 22 meeting

- The Board honored Valley View Bank with a proclamation for their help with the District's Alert System to the tune of \$80,000.
- Parents in the district are awaking to what happens when monies are not available to do all the things that are expected. Case-in point is Mill Creek Elementary and the increases in class sizes, in particular the Kindergarten classes. During Open Forum five parents asked the Board to try to help them. In an unprecedented move, Superintendent Johnson told the parents that the District had budgeted for five extra teachers to be used in such a situation, but they have had to add eight more teachers and were now in deficit spending. This will be looked into, but there is not much that can be done. One of the Board members stated that with the closing of schools, increasing fees, laying off teachers and increasing class sizes, why are people surprised that this would happen.
- Very informative presentation on the No Child Left Behind and the Kansas Performance Accreditation. Remember in 2014 schools must be at 100 percent according to the federal guidelines. District schools in most cases are at 90 percent with ongoing new projects to help meet these guidelines.
- The Board approved the sale of Bonjour Elementary School to Shawnee Mission Unitarian Universalist Church for \$1,225,000. The Board also approved the sale of five acres located behind Ray Marsh Elementary for \$125,000.

Virginia Johnson

Lenexa City Council August 16 meeting

- The Lenexa City Council approved the 2012 budget, which will allow the city to continue maintaining quality city services and funding capital improvement projects despite declining revenues.
- Overall expenditures in 2012 will be down by 3.5 percent from the budgeted expenditures in 2011; however, the 2012 budget continues to focus on quality city services and maintaining existing staffing levels. The budget also maintains appropriate reserve levels in city funds and continues funding for the pavement maintenance program and parks projects with revenue from the 3/8-cent sales tax approved by voters in 2008.
- The City Council also approved the 2012–2016 capital improvement program. The total capital improvement budget is \$142.8 million and includes 44 funded projects.
- Lenexa has experienced declining property taxes for the past four years. Although tax revenues appear to have stabilized in recent months, total collections for property taxes, sales taxes, and other revenues are well below amounts received prior to the recession. Additionally, the 2006 State Legislature's decision to exempt new machinery and equipment from property taxation caused an additional \$2.5 million loss in city property tax revenue. The city began taking action to address declining revenues in 2008. Expenses were reduced in numerous areas during the past three years, including reducing staff, reducing overtime costs, eliminating pay increases in 2010 and freezing the city's defined benefit pension plan. Also, the city is projecting a draw down of the general fund reserve by about \$1 million in 2011. However, these actions are not sufficient to make up for the revenue loss caused by the State Legislature.
- After studying the budget, considering alternatives and listening to citizen input during the past six weeks, the council voted to approve the 2012 budget with a three-mill property tax increase (from 26.626 mills to 29.626 mills). The increase will make up for the \$2.5 million loss in machinery and equipment property tax revenue, but it does not restore revenue levels to what they were prior to the recession. Before voting to approve the budget, each council member spoke briefly regarding their thoughts and concerns about the proposed budget.

Lenexa City Council September 6 meeting

- Johnson County Commissioner Michael Ashcraft had a special presentation for the City Council which looked at six strategic program areas for the county - Culture and Recreation, Health and Human Services, Infrastructure, Records and Taxation, Support Services, and Public Safety, Judicial, and Emergency Services. The county plans to re-open the jail in downtown Olathe and purchase six new ambulances. Staff reductions are anticipated in all departments with the hope to have minimal impact on the services offered by the county. The final revised 2012 plan for waste water management will have an impact of a \$2.09 monthly increase for the median consumer. Johnson County has maintained its AAA bond rating.
- The council members stated that this was the first presentation of its kind they have received in their years of service on the council and voiced their appreciation to the commissioner for his time.
- Lenexa received the Bronze Award for "Best Cities" from *Ingrams* magazine.

Sheri Potter

Wyandotte County United Government Commission

August 18 meeting

- Mayor's Agenda - Former commissioner Pat Pettey and the coordinator of the Wyandotte Homeless Service Coalition presented a report on Wyandotte County and Metro KC Homeless. Federal stimulus funding is expected to end in 2012. The Wyandotte County grant from this funding for the three-year term was \$1,000,000. The coordinator asked the Unified Government Commission to continue funding the full time coordinator and to appoint a Commissioner to serve on the coalition.
- Administrator's Agenda - approval was given to receive a Congestion Mitigation Air Quality grant from MARC for 2011/20112 in the amount of \$1,775,600. UG will match the local 20 percent match from the annual US Transit general funds.

Wyandotte County United Government Commission

August 25 meeting

- Plan Review Application - Approval for the Preliminary and Final Plan for multi-story office space for Cerner Corp. at 10201 State Avenue was given with first phase to be completed in 2013 and the second stage in 2014.
- Planning and Zoning Miscellaneous - Approval was given to amend the Master Plan for Wyandotte County for 500 acres from 118th Street to 126th Street and State Avenue to Parallel Parkway. The change will allow for more market rate apartment buildings and residences than could be built under the original plan. As each phase is developed, they will have to get approval from the Commission. There was opposition to this change. The neighbors were concerned about the density and the effects it will have on the traffic, schools, etc.
- Non-Planning Agenda - an ordinance and resolution were passed to allow the Unified Government to refund a portion of outstanding General Obligation Bond in the amount of \$14,145,000. A lower interest rate was obtained.

Wyandotte County United Government Commission

September 1 meeting.

- Mayor's Agenda - The commission has until 12-31 to draw up redistricting based on the new census.
- Consent Agenda - Approval was given to accept \$62,899. in funding for Kansas Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting.
- Standing Committee Agenda. - Three requests for certain parking signs in a residential area near KU Medical Center were sent back to the Public Works and Safety Committee for rework.
- Commissioner's Agenda - A resolution was passed establishing and authorizing an amnesty program to address outstanding and unpaid warrants pending in the KCK Municipal Court.

Pat Yingst and Marilyn Bynum

Recent U.S. Senate Votes

[Leahy-Smith America Invents Act](#) - Vote **Passed** (89-9, 2 Not Voting) The Senate gave final approval to this bill that would change the way patents are awarded from "first to invent" to "first to file." The overhaul is intended to speed up the process of awarding patents. The House passed the bill in June. President Obama is expected to sign it into law.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **YES** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **YES**

[Motion to Proceed; Debt limit disapproval](#) - Vote **Rejected** (45-52, 3 Not Voting) The Senate rejected this motion to take up a resolution that would have disapproved a \$500 billion debt limit increase. Under the budget law enacted on August 2, the debt limit was increase by \$400 billion. A second increase of \$500 billion will take effect unless Congress passes a disapproval measure.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **YES** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **YES**

[Emergency Supplemental Disaster Relief Appropriations Resolution, 2011](#) - Vote **Agreed to** (62-37, 1 Not Voting) The Senate agreed to add supplemental disaster relief funding to legislation extending the trade sanctions on Myanmar, still commonly known as Burma. The bill, later passed by unanimous consent, would provide \$6.9 billion in immediate aid. The vote came after the Senate rejected two proposals to offset the cost of the funding.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **NO** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **NO**

[Surface and Air Transportation Programs Extension Act of 2011](#) - Vote **Passed** (92-6, 2 Not Voting) On Thursday, the Senate approved this bill to extend FAA programs through January 2012 and surface transportation authorization through March 2012. The House had passed the bill by voice vote earlier in the week. Aviation programs were scheduled to expire on September 16, and highway programs would have expired this week. The president signed the bill on Friday.

Sen. Pat Roberts voted **YES** **Sen. Jerry Moran** voted **YES**

Recent U.S. House Votes

[Intelligence Authorization Act, FY 2012](#) - Vote **Passed** (384-14, 33 Not Voting) This House bill would authorize spending for the 16 intelligence agencies in the upcoming fiscal year. The cost of the bill is classified. The Senate is expected to take up the bill later this year.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

[Protecting Jobs From Government Interference Act](#) - Vote **Passed** (238-186, 9 Not Voting) The House approved this legislation to limit the authority of the National Labor Relations Board. The bill prohibits the board from ordering an employer to restore, shut down or relocate operations. The Senate is unlikely to take up the measure.

Rep. Kevin Yoder voted **YES**

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

Upcoming Events

Saturday September 24	League Day at the Capitol: 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.; Capitol Plaza Hotel, 1717 SW Topeka Blvd, Topeka, KS
Tuesday September 27	Public Hearing on Johnson County Commission Charter: 7 p.m.; Sylvester Powell Community Center, 6200 Martway, Mission, KS.
Thursday September 29	Naturalization Ceremony: Register new voters; 1:30 p.m.; Federal Courthouse, 5th and State, Kansas City, KS
Friday September 30	Naturalization Ceremony: Register new voters; 1:30 p.m.; Federal Courthouse, 5th and State, Kansas City, KS
Saturday October 1	General Meeting: "Democracy on Trial: Laws, Lawsuits and the "Little Man" [Voter ID]; 8:30 a.m. social time, 9 a.m. program, 11 a.m. board meeting; Atonement Lutheran Church, 9948 Metcalf, Overland Park, KS
Monday October 4	Consensus Meeting: "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education" History, Common Core Standards; Discussion Questions 1-9; 7-9 p.m.; Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th Street, OP, KS.
Tuesday October 24	Consensus Meeting: "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education" History, Common Core Standards; Discussion Questions 1-9; 7-9 p.m.; Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th Street, OP, KS.
Wednesday October 26	Consensus Meeting: "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education" Equity and Funding; Discussion Questions 10-15; 7-9 p.m. ; Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th Street, Overland Park, KS.
Thursday October 27	Consensus Meeting: "Role of the Federal Government in Public Education" Equity and Funding; Discussion Questions 10-15; 7-9 p.m. ; Central Resource Library, 9875 W. 87th Street, Overland Park, KS.

The deadline for the November VOTER is October 15.