



League of Women Voters of San Diego County

COUNTY VOTER

Winter 2009

An Inter-League Organization (ILO) - City of San Diego • East San Diego County • North Coast • Escondido

Website: <http://sdcilo.ca.lwvnet.org>

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Co-Presidents' Letters

The 2009 New Year for the County League may continue current action projects and open the door for new ones. The final decisions by the California Public Utilities Commission on the SDG&E Sunrise Powerlink and the U.S. Dept of Commerce final decision on the San Onofre Toll Road should be made by December 31, 2008. The County League opposes both projects.

All of the County Local Leagues provided impressive Voter Services for the 2008 elections. The November election received many League candidate forums, pros & cons, voting rights and education for school students. The County League board of directors invites any League member interested in Voter Services to join our board. The position is vacant at this time. Please contact me for any information or questions.

The dedicated and hardworking Smart Voter team has reviewed their work on the November 2008 election. San Diego County had the largest number of November candidates in California. The team sent a letter of invitation to 500 candidates, who could obtain free space to publish a biography, career highlights, lists of supporters, position papers, photos, and their website links, all available to voters. Joyce Joseph, Smart Voter County League Coordinator, announced that many candidates responded to the letters earlier this year which indicated their confidence in Smart Voter

The 54,000 page hits by people contacting the November elections Smart Voter was double the 2006 number, a good indication that the public is becoming more aware and interested in Smart Voter. The current Smart Voter team members are looking

forward to the 2010 election. They plan to include more media outreach to increase publicity about Smart Voter.

During 2009, the County League action and calendar of events will be on the County League Website. You can email any comments to us at <http://www.sdcilo.ca.lwvnet.org/index.html>. Click on the "email the league" at the bottom of the website home page.

Nancy McCleary, Co- President

In November the LWV County Board approved a county study addressing the Prevention and Protection Provided by Fire Services. A study committee has been formed and we have met. At the Board meeting on December 6, the scope of the study was approved and will include the following components:

- ❖ Review existing studies and reports
- ❖ Are the existing fire protection services adequate in all locations?
- ❖ Describe gaps in services
- ❖ Propose programs and funding, including reorganization and/or new organizations, to close these gaps
- ❖ Prepare consensus questions and ask local presidents to hold consensus meetings and respond to the County Board
- ❖ Propose a County League position at the Annual meeting in 2010.

Even though this may not happen as quickly as we would like, remember the League process takes time. In the meantime, we accepted a position that was developed by the East County League at the June 2008 annual meeting and are in a position to take action.

If you would like to serve on the study committee; you would be most welcome and we will quickly give you an assignment before you change your mind. Our next meeting is on Saturday, January 24 from 10:30 –12:00 pm at the League Office. Please let me know if you want to volunteer to serve on the committee, kragand@cox.net.

Kay Ragan, Co-President

Energy Report Update Continues Push for Increased Renewable Energy

This report is dedicated to the memory of

JANE HUGHES TURNBULL

June 13, 1932 – October 18, 2008

With gratitude for her tireless devotion and invaluable contributions to the development of California's energy policies on behalf of the League of Women Voters and all the residents of California

The following is an excerpt from the California Energy Commission's Press Release regarding the Integrated Energy Policy Report Update which can be found at:

<http://www.energy.ca.gov/2008publications/CEC-100-2008-008/CEC-100-2008-008-CTF.PDF>

The California Energy Commission unanimously adopted the 2008 Integrated Energy Policy Report Update (2008 IEPR Update). The report assesses the progress on energy programs and policy report that are critical to meeting California's energy and related environmental goals. "This report can be seen as an update of our progress implementing California's loading order," said Chairman Jack-alyne Pfannenstiel.

"It looks at how we are doing in investing in energy efficiency. It looks at renewable energy and lays a foundation for the Governor's recently signed Executive Order. It looks at the electricity procurement process and asks whether it's working for the benefit of California ratepayers."

The 2008 IEPR Update focuses on five significant topic areas discussed in the 2007 IEPR:

- *Evaluating the market, physical and operational changes necessary to move to a higher renewable future to support the 33 percent renewable energy goal by 2020.

- *Analyzing how the state's energy efficiency goals and programs interact with the Energy Commission's electricity demand forecast.

- *Improving electricity procurement practices.

- *Assessing nuclear plant vulnerability to seismic/aging issues.

- *Evaluating the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) self-generation incentive program to determine the costs and benefits of providing ratepayer benefits for renewable fossil fuels and distributed generation.

"The Update's analysis builds on the recommendations and important work from the 2007 IEPR," commented Commissioner Jeffrey Byron, Presiding Member 2008 IEPR Update and 2009 IEPR Committees, "and the 2009 IEPR will take this work further to continue advancing strategies that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, expand energy diversity with renewable energy and alternative fuels and lower energy demand in a cost-effective manner for Californians."

To help meet the Governor's goal of 33 percent renewables by 2020, the Update suggests that the Energy Commission identify ways to overcome the legal and market obstacles to joint transmission lines between the investor-owned and publicly owned utilities, increase transmission-related research and development funding and address the impacts that delays in renewable contract and cancellations might have on reaching our target and environmental concerns.

In one of the few times in more than 30 years, the Energy Commission dedicated the 2008 Integrated Energy Policy Report Update to the memory of Jane Hughes Turnbull, who passed away in October. Ms. Turnbull, the quintessential representative of the League of Women Voters, was a regular, always well-informed partici-

pant at many Energy Commission events over numerous years, particularly the Integrated Energy Policy Report and electricity and renewable energy policy proceedings. Her intellectual and personal contributions will be missed.

The Ups and Downs of County Government

By Eddie Cisco

The County of San Diego was named Top Digital County by the U.S. Association of Counties. Five departments in San Diego were included as recipients of the award.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services gave the San Diego Foster Children and Adoptions program an Award of Excellence. The Friends of Libraries summer essay contest produced eight winners, both children and adults. The essay topic was *Silence or Noise?*

The Downs! A graphic (literally) report from the Chief Financial Officer. The last few decades have shown a rising line of income from property tax but 2008 is flat and 2009 is projected to be down! Sales tax also. The state's problems don't trickle down, it's a waterfall!

Caregivers from In-Home Support Services (IHSS) come every month to beg for more allowable hours or more money per hour, but never stay for the financial report. Health and Human Services has very little discretionary money. Supervisor Slater Price reiterated the Board's desire to use the money for prevention (after school recreation programs, etc) rather than mandated courts and jails. Ninety-four percent of Health and Human Services revenue is in categorical grants that must be used for stated programs. The IHSS recipients' numbers increase by ten percent each year, and it is a mandate, an initiative passed by the public.

Exploring a Possible State League Prison Study

The following is a message from Jean Thomson,

League of Women Voters of Los Angeles, Chair of the League of Women Voters California (LWVC) Exploratory Prison Study committee.

As the California Leagues of Women Voters begin their deliberations for the next state programs, I am representing a group of Leagues that are encouraging you to consider a study of the state prison system. Many local leagues have studied issues surrounding jails and the justice system and we now are looking forward to expanding these studies to the statewide prison system.

A great group of league delegates met at the last LWVC Leadership Council and have been planning to propose a study of the California Prison System for the 2009/2011 period. There were representatives from San Diego to Butte County and many leagues in between. We have a committee ready to tackle the review of each league's input and to form the scope of the study. Of course, we will welcome anyone who would like to join us.

The overcrowding, the federal health care receivership (with threats of another one), the discouraging recidivism rate (highest in the nation), and the latest ballot measures demanding more prisons, longer prison terms, court-mandated prison population caps vs more education and rehabilitation to prevent the recidivism indicate the intensity of feelings within the government, in the prisons, and the electorate. We are not even aware that one of the very largest portions of the state budget is the Correction System at \$10 billion (surpassing higher education). The federal receivership has authority to claim \$8 billion over the next five years from the state budget for new prisons and new health care facilities

We feel it is time we took a look at what the \$10 billion is accomplishing. The League is the only resource for a nonpartisan, unbiased discussion of what this system is costing the taxpayers, the prisoners, and our society.

Please consider this for the state study during your planning sessions. A powerpoint presentation is available.

County Draft General Plan for Public Review

The Draft General Plan for the County of San Diego is now available on the Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) website under Draft General Plan. You can also get it on a CD or in hard copy for a charge. The 60-day review and comment period ends January 16, 2009. Comments can be emailed to gupdate.DPLU@sdcounty.ca.gov

Consistent with the project schedule developed this past year, after public comments on the Draft General Plan, the next steps will be to complete and hold public review of the plans' Draft Environmental Impact Report. This is projected for late 2009 and the final General Plan Update will be brought to the Board of Supervisors for approval in the fall of 2010.

Other key items in the General Plan Update process are the Community Plans and the Implementation Plan. Preparation for these documents is underway and expected to be ready for review in 2009. More information on these will be available and distributed closer to the Public Review of these documents. General Plans are the supreme document, the "constitutions" that guide the future development of the communities they represent. They provide a vision of the community's future. They set the philosophy and policies that decide, in general, what gets built where – how communities will accommodate growth while preserving character and protecting what the community values. The importance of the County's General Plan within our region cannot be understated. While the unincorporated county houses just 15 percent of the region's population, its size is immense. Its 800,000 acres of privately-owned land is more than three times the size of the City of San Diego, and nearly twice the combined size of the region's 18 cities. It is home to a significant agricultural economy and contains open space that is critical to countless rare species and provides valuable recreational space for everyone.

This update is the first comprehensive overhaul of the County's General Plan in 30 years. It is guided

by the County's three strategic initiatives: to improve opportunities for our children; to protect the environment; and to promote and save livable communities.

The General Plan Update would improve the current plan by balancing the need to accommodate growth with the needs to control traffic congestion, protect environmental habitat, and ease the strain on essential services such as water supplies and fire protection. That will be accomplished in part by shifting 20 percent of future growth to western unincorporated communities with established infrastructure such as roads.

The General Plan Update would reduce the growth that the current general plan would allow by 15 percent. But it would still allow 168,000 to 198,000 more people to live in the unincorporated communities that now house roughly 491,800 people.

The update contains numerous goals and policies aimed at respecting community character, climate change, infrastructure planning and environmental preservation.

The General Plan Update's chapters are set around the seven elements required by State law. They set the foundation to create innovative land use policy; increase mobility for drivers, riders, bicyclists and others; provide housing choices that would benefit all residents; manage natural resources through conservation and by preserving open space; provide protection from wildfires and other natural hazards to ensure public safety; and protect communities from intrusive noise.

This General Plan was developed with broad public input - - from builders, business owners, environmentalists, farmers, homeowners, landowners and renters - - in a process that seeks to balance competing interests and reach consensus.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT...

**RAFFLE TICKETS WILL BE COMING YOUR WAY
IN JANUARY.
GREAT PRIZES...SUGGESTED DONATION
ONE TICKET FOR \$5 OR THREE TICKETS FOR \$10

YOUR PARTICIPATION IS APPRECIATED**