

ARGUS

NEWS FROM THE MIDWEST BY PAT HOCKEN, LWVLC PRESIDENT

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I recently visited my mother and my sister who live in a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri. While visiting, I was interested to learn about situations that parallel those in Oregon and have related a few in the paragraphs below.

Because of the recession, many state budgets are in disarray as is Oregon's. Missouri is no exception. Their state tax receipts for the current fiscal year are expected to be down 13.8 percent, on the heels of a 6.9 percent drop in the prior fiscal year. In response, dramatic cuts have been made to the state's operating budget. Missouri's K-12

schools, which for a decade had enjoyed increasing state dollars, were held to "flat" funding with no inflation adjustment, which many viewed with relief in the face of slashed spending on education in other states.

An editorial in the St. Louis Post Dispatch laid out grim data about Missouri's fiscal realities: "...A state that has lost 101,500 manufacturing jobs in the last 10 years; a state whose median household income has dropped farther and faster than any state but Michigan's; a state that taxes people living in poverty at the same 6% rate that it taxes billion-

aires; a state that consistently ranks in the bottom quintile on most measures of state services; a state that drastically needs a major overhaul of its tax structure...". Some of these problems sound remarkably familiar.

Another issue that Missouri shares with Oregon is the presence of invasive species that are rapidly spreading due to human activities. Oregon has just adopted a new license for all watercraft longer than 10 feet to raise money to work on the problem in lakes and streams. The zebra mussels are a pest common to both

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FALL LUNCHEON SPEAKER TO BE OREGON ATTORNEY GENERAL JOHN KROGER

Arrangements for the Fall Luncheon of the League of Women Voters of Lane County have been set. Oregon's Attorney General John Kroger will speak to us on **Wednesday, September 22, at the Mallard Banquet Hall. Please note that this is a different date than previously announced.**

AG Kroger was elected to his office in November 2008. Previously, he had served for many years as a federal criminal prosecutor and won major cases against mafia

killers, drug kingpins, and corrupt government officials. He also had served as a law professor at Lewis and Clark Law School in Portland.

Please plan to be at the luncheon and be sure to bring a guest with you. The fall luncheon is a great way to start the League program year after a summer break. Watch future issues of the ARGUS for information about reservations and prepayment as well as AG Kroger's presentation.



Pat Hocken

OREGON'S INTEGRATED WATER RESOURCES STRATEGY A WAY TO MERGE THE SILOES?

As we learned from unit discussions or by reading *Water in Oregon - Not a Drop to Waste*, an area of concern is the lack of coordination among the eleven state agencies responsible for managing some aspect of the resource. We have an opportunity in early June to help promote agency cooperation by participating in a community meeting sponsored by an interagency team charged by the legislature with developing an integrated water resources strategy for Oregon.

The open house will be held on **June 10 from 4 pm to 7 pm** at the Eugene Public Library. However, the program will actually consist of two separate back-to-

back sessions, one from 4 pm to 5:30 pm and one from 5:30 pm to 7 pm. Both sessions will include a staff presentation followed by audience input.

I encourage League members to attend since you know a lot about water in our area and throughout the state. The delegates to the League of Women Voters of Oregon Council in Bend in May enthusiastically participated in such a workshop at the beginning of Council. The format of the sessions makes it easy to share your knowledge and concerns.

The event has three purposes:

1) providing information to the

participants about the project, 2) gathering input from community members about water resource challenges, opportunities and recommended actions, and

3) highlighting successful local examples of water resource solutions currently being implemented. The four state agencies working on the strategy are the Water Resources Department, the Department of Environmental Quality, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Department of Agriculture. Lane County staff will also participate in the meeting.

Pat Hocken

MIDWEST - CONT.

states, having first arrived in this country in the ballast water of freighters. They are freshwater mollusks that attach themselves to hard surfaces and create serious impacts for power plants, irrigation systems, and municipal and other water users by clogging pipes, pumps, turbines, and filtration systems. (In Oregon the Bonneville Power Administration worries that it will need to periodically remove turbines on the hydroelectric dams for cleaning, thus reducing generating capacity while increasing expenses.)

Another midwestern pest that is fortunately not now a serious

issue in Oregon is the Asian or silver carp, which were imported during the 1970's by fish farmers to help clean algae from the aquaculture ponds. The fish, which escaped into the Mississippi river system during flooding, routinely weigh 25 pounds or more and can leap with enough energy to injure boaters and anglers and to vault over roads. They are estimated to populate the Illinois River at a rate between 3,000 and 6,000 fish per river mile. A Louisiana chef believes that the best solution is to use these tasty, but bony fish as a food source and has started a commercial operation to process and market frozen fillets.

On a more positive note, Mis-

souri and Illinois are working together to build a bicycle/pedestrian loop along both banks of the Mississippi River near the St. Louis waterfront. This many-mile path will be linked by at least two bridges across the river.

Traveling can be fun for many reasons such as reconnecting with friends and relatives or discovering the history of an area or visiting natural and man-made wonders. But one of my favorite aspects is learning how the news of the day is both similar to and different from what's happening at home. The League has taught me enough about Oregon that I have a good lens through which to view other places.

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Voters' Guides – What Changes Should We Make?

Many thanks to all the volunteers who put new labels on the Guides to correct the party affiliation of one of the candidates and who helped distribute copies of the Voters' Guides to various locations in Lane County.

There was discussion at the May Board meeting on the Voters' Guides for the November ballot. We discussed what format is most useful to citizens – for example, should we recommend that the state League compile a version that contains only information

about the measures on the ballot and does not include information about the candidates? Should we order only the Easy Voter Guide since it seemed to be a popular version? Should we emphasize that the election information is available on the League website and reduce the number of paper Guides that we distribute? Should we order only a small number of large-print copies or none at all since very few were distributed for the primary?

These questions about the Voters' Guides are very important as we plan for the November ballot, and we would appreciate your thoughts

and recommendations on these issues. Contact us with your ideas: Barbara at 541-485-9090 or babsfr44@comcast.net; Susan at 541-999-4197 or susantavakolian@yahoo.com.

Debates

The Lane County League co-sponsored two debates related to the May 18 primary: One was a candidate forum for the open position of County Commissioner, District #2, and the other was a debate on Measure 20-158, 4-H and Extension Service Five-Year Local Option Tax. Thank you to the volunteers who helped with these events.

ENVISION EUGENE BY PAT HOCKEN

The City of Eugene has embarked on a planning effort that may lead to changes in the City's Urban Growth Boundary and the comprehensive land use plan. As part of that initiative, the City is holding community meetings to get citizen input. Meetings will be held May 26 in the Churchill High School Cafeteria, 1850 Bailey Hill Road and June 23 in the Willamette High School Cafeteria, 1801 Echo Hollow Road. Both meetings will begin at 6 pm with an open house, followed by a workshop from 7 - 9 pm.

More information is available at the project's website: www.EnvisionEugene.org.

Below is some background information that appears on the website.

Why we look different? (Planning in Oregon)

Oregon's statewide planning program is one of the biggest reasons we look different from other states. Every community in Oregon has an urban growth boundary (UGB) – a limit to how far the city can physically grow out which protects our farms and forests from unplanned development. The UGB must contain enough land for our projected needs over the next 20 years. Since the early 1970's, when Governor Tom McCall famously called on Oregonians to keep Oregon, Oregon, most new development has happened within urban growth boundaries instead of along highways and county roads.

What's inside the boundary? (Assessing Eugene's Urban Growth Boundary)

Eugene and Springfield have shared an urban growth boundary since 1982. In 2007, state Legislature passed House Bill 3337 which allows each city to manage growth in accordance with their residents' own needs and values. The bill requires each city to develop its own urban growth boundary. With Interstate 5 as the dividing line, Eugene and Springfield will soon have their own boundaries. In creating a Eugene-only UGB, the first step is to assess how much land will be needed for our future growth. This includes land for housing, commercial and industrial

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ACTION BY KAPPY EATON

Review of 2010 Initiatives

83 filed
18 active
6 Constitutional amendments
12 Statutes
10 of possible League interest

Details

Traditionally, the League does not take positions on initiatives while they are being circulated unless we have been part of the process to develop and to bring the issue to the public via the initiative process. After an initiative petition has qualified for the ballot, it is reviewed by the Action Team and any decision to support, oppose or remain neutral when the League has a position, goes to the State Board for a final decision as to League action. The following petitions are being monitored since they contain issues related to our positions:

#70 – constitutional amendment to provide funding for water, parks and wildlife. It modifies and definitively renews 15% of lottery proceeds to parks and natural resources. The current dedication of 15% to these purposes is due to sunset, and this would continue the funding without pause.

#66 – a constitutional amendment which would require voter approval of all taxes and fees on motor vehicle use and fuels and ownership. There is limited retroactivity, a change

from the original proposal.

#50 – a constitutional amendment which would repeal the current legislative redistricting process. It would create a new process conducted by an appointed commission of retired judges. They would be appointed by the Supreme Court

#42 – a constitutional amendment to the Forest Practices Act that imposes new requirements and restrictions. It would require the adoption of new rules and allow citizen lawsuits.

#30 – a constitutional amendment to recognize that certain human beings have the right to life. Life would begin at fertilization and all abortions would be prohibited.

#19 – a statutory tax change exempting senior citizens from property taxes on their primary residence. The measure recognizes that the measure would reduce revenue to local governments but does not indicate a new source of funding.

#13 – a statutory measure to fight crime. It would require increased minimum sentences for certain reported sex crimes. It also would require incarceration for repeated driving under the influence.

#75, 76, 77 are three related measures related to allowing

a casino in Multnomah county. Currently there is a ban on such casinos. **#75** and **#76** are constitutional amendments (two different versions) which would require the legislature to approve one private casino if authorized by the affected citizens. **#77** spells out the arrangement for the casino proceeds which go to the state lottery for deposit in a Oregon Job Growth, Educational and Communities Fund, separate from the General Fund. The funds are distributed by the lottery as follows: 50% to Oregon school districts based on their proportion of the state education allocation; 30% to the 36 counties by population. They must share half with any city over 49,000, and 25% of a county's net share must go to public safety services. The casino's host city gets 4%; 3% goes to the State Police; 2% goes to the host county; and 2% goes to the Problem Gambling Treatment Fund. Apparently the other 9% is for administration. The intriguing part of this multi-initiative proposal is its coverage of issues such as K-12, gambling, counties in crisis, etc.

Other initiatives include four related to marijuana, one which would exempt land owners from injury or death responsibility when deadly force is used against tres-

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ACTION CONTINUED

(Continued from page 4)

passing adults and one which increase required felony incarceration time and creates consecutive sentence pre-emptions.

We will know by August 1 which initiatives will be on the ballot. We already know that having annual legislative sessions will be voted on in November, having been referred by the Special Session. As of May 21, it appears that Initiative #70 on parks, #13 on tougher penalties for sex crimes and drunk driving, and #28 which deals with medical marijuana dispensaries will make the ballot as the signatures on petitions thus far are close to reaching the number required to qualify for the November election. This is a far cry from the 2008 election and will make our job of explaining the issues much easier.

Interim Committees

The 2009 interim committees have announced three sets of meetings between now and the 2011 legislative session. Some committees started the process at the end of the February Special Session by holding informational hearings on expected 2011 issues. In the governance area such areas included additional initiative reforms, review of the comprehensive ethics changes from 2007 and 2009, review of the new electronic voter

registration system and other election changes and redistricting, as well as revenue issues such as tax expenditure reviews, Business Energy Tax Credit revision implementation, proposed changes to Ballot Measure #50 relating to property tax in equities and revisions in the budget process.

The June revenue forecast will be given on May 25. It will reveal whether Oregon is coming out of the recession or there is a continuing shortfall of revenue. State agencies have been requested to submit budget proposals showing the impact of 25% cuts from the current services level because the worst case scenario has a shortfall of around \$2.5 billion for 2011-13. The first set of meetings goes from May 24 to May 26; the second from September 21 to 23, and the last December 15 and 16.

While there is improvement in the number of jobs opening up, the backlog of persons still seeking employment makes the increases almost a wash.

GETF

The Government Efficiency Task Force was authorized by HB 2920. It has held six meetings since November and has four subgroups discussing and preparing recommendations to be reported to the 2011 Legislature. The group is charged with exam-

ining the mandates for jointly provided services involving local governments and the state. We expect changes to be considered related to taxation and assessment, elections, criminal justice and human services. At the May 14 meeting, Task Force Chair Rep. Nancy Nathanson cautioned against considering changes which would probably not be carried forward by the Legislature. Following are the first draft ideas from the four subcommittees:

Such issues as not having precinct committee people on the ballot, ways of dealing with expanded ballots and ballot changes because of fusion at local government elections, additional technology, shared costs, and voter registration modifications are on the Elections subcommittee agenda. The Criminal Justice group is looking at such ideas as moving all public safety agencies into one facility and or pooling purchasing, allowing officers who must be in court which often causes lost hours/days to participate on the internet, better collection system for small court claims, and consolidation of motor pools, with different services at each pool. The Human Services group presented four main themes – assessment of return on the investment of current programs and services, collaboration and contracting in services delivery,

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LWVLC Action Committee will meet June 2, 9:30 am, in the League office.

EUGENE - CONT.

uses, parks, schools, and other public uses. This land need is being studied in the Eugene Comprehensive Lands Assessment (ECLA) project.

What will your city look like? (Envisioning Eugene’s Future)

Eugene’s land assessment project (ECLA) will set the status quo

scenario for how much land we would need to accommodate our 20 year population projections if things happen in the future as they have happened in the past. With Envision Eugene, we have an opportunity to look at alternative futures that are different from the base case scenario and that may lessen the need to expand the city outward. These alternatives look at how Eugene could grow by asking:

- What if we increased the amount of infill development in certain places and in certain ways?
- What if we offered incentives for mixed use development in identified locations?
- What housing options exist for people moving into the community or for people moving within Eugene?

ACTION - CONT.

work across programs to get most needed services delivery, and determine what outcomes and goals are expected, and setting criteria for the final recommendations to stress the importance of policy statements. Assessment and Taxation group considerations include changing the property tax system across the state to make it standard, changing the outmoded requirements for hard copies and publication notices, putting more forms on line, revising various appeals and land values formulas, changing public records laws regarding addresses, and lobbying to have a work group formed for a report in 2013 to create central administration and consolidate categories. Stay tuned for more precise recommendations later in the summer.

LWLC Action committee

We met with transportation representatives from ODOT (Oregon Department of Transportation) and Lane County Public Works to discuss the establishment of a Lane Area Commission on Transportation (ACTs). There are 10 in the state, and Lane is the only area still represented by the Board of Commissioners. The law was changed in 2009 (SB944) to require the Lane ACT. Bylaws have been drafted by a committee which will be considered by the Oregon Commission on Transportation (OCT) at its June meeting. The local ACT will be appointed by the Governor. There is competition among the ACTs for the limited funding available so each area group puts plans together for projects based on priorities for the region. The League will be following the progress of the new Lane ACT.

The City Council is expected to act soon on the proposal for expanding the Downtown Renewal District and using funds for four projects, including a new building for LCC. At this time, the Eugene Council appears to have a 6-2 majority in favor of the proposal. Based on the testimony at the hearing (the League supports), there is civic and business support, but there may be a referendum referral if the Council approves the action. If successful, the challenge would be voted on in November.

CAPS (Citizen Advocates for Public Safety) has concluded its research into the public safety and related human services programs and funding in the county and is preparing a final report to the public and the Lane BCC. The polling project for the county now appears to be postponed until after the November election.

TIME FOR SPRING CLEANING

Several of our members have been doing spring cleaning recently, and they have remembered our League's used book fund raiser. We have gotten some nice donations. In the past month the books sold have brought in \$47.00. This brings the total amount

for the year to \$1,789.50. Your books can be left in the blue box in the work room at the office. If you are not able to get them there, or if you have too many to carry, just give us a call. We will be out of town off and on during the next month, but we'll be

checking the messages on our answering machine and can arrange for someone to pick up your books if we're not in town.

Thank you for your donations.

Elleen and Louie Levy
541-343-7592



Kenneth-Elle photo, Wiltshire engraving
MRS. KARL PETERSON



League of Women Voters of Eugene 1945 President
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As a member of the League, you will receive the monthly newsletter from LW LC (Argus), which has information about our monthly and unit meetings, and the quarterly newsletter from the Oregon League (Voter).

Mail the form and check payable to LWVLC to:

LWVLC
 338 West 11th Ave, Suite 101
 Eugene, OR 97401

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS LANE COUNTY

Membership Form

- Individual \$60
- Household (Two people at the same address) \$90
- Student \$20
- Individual (after February 1) \$30

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 Email (for League use only)



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN
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CALENDAR

JUNE

- 2, 9:30 am, Action Committee
- 10, 4 - 7 pm, Integrated Water Resources Strategy Open House,
Eugene Public Library PAGE 2
- 11-15, LWVUS convention, Atlanta, GA
- 23, 3 pm, LWVLC board meeting
- 25, midnight, ARGUS deadline

JULY

- 4, Independence Day
- 5, LWVLC Office closed

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day the League office is open

Mondays and Wednesdays, 11am to 1:30pm

Our Mission

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.