



57 Members Making Democracy Work at www.lwvchaffeecounty.org

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CALENDAR 2015

- March 12** – Great Decisions, “India Changes Course”
- March 16** – Colorado Water Plan, Salida
- March 24** – City of Salida special election
- March 26** – Great Decisions, “U.S. Policy toward Africa”
- April 20** – LWVCC Annual Dinner, Salida
- May 16, 17** – LWVCO convention

LWVCC program discusses energy

The League of Women Voters of Chaffee County (LWVCC) hosted a meeting in February about renewable energy. The audience included two non-league members who introduced themselves as professionals in the energy field and contributed comments about renewable energy sources.



Paul Erikson, CEO of Sangre de Cristo Electric Association (SDCEA) provided background information about the non-profit corporation and its membership in the larger co-operative. SCDEA is one of 44 co-op members of the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association that serves 1.5 million customers and provides wholesale electricity to SDCEA and co-ops in Colorado, New Mexico, Wyoming and Nebraska.

Erickson said SDCEA is highly leveraged with 40 employees and purchases its electricity and transmitting equipment from Tri-State. If there is a net income, it is credited back to the members. Unclaimed credits provide scholarships for members and their families.

Erickson also talked about legislative issues. He explained that SB 13-252 increased the renewable energy standard (RES) from 10 percent in 2015 to 20 percent in 2020. Erickson supports the RES but feels the stipulation that at least 1 percent be distributed generation, like rooftop solar, is too difficult for most co-ops to reach. He supports SB 15-046, which would decrease the cost of the RES by allowing purchases of electricity from community solar gardens to qualify as retail distributed generation with the multiplier of three. He feels that rooftop solar installers were favored in the original bill.

He also supports HB 15-1118 that would allow large-scale hydroelectricity and stored hydroelectricity to meet the RES. However, this bill is currently tabled. He opposed SB 15-044 that would have halved the RES for both co-ops and investor-owned Excel that did not pass the House. State Senator Kerry Donovan is initiating stakeholder meetings on SB 15-046. The Colorado League of Women Voters opposes all three bills.

Bill Bennett, energy use adviser, and Linda Nyberg, communications and marketing specialist for SDCEA, offered help to consumers about energy reduction and rebates. Information about saving energy and getting rebates on energy-saving appliances and light bulbs are available at myelectric.coop. A full report of the program by member Linda Mulka is attached to this e-mail and will be available on the Web site at www.lwvchaffeecounty.org.



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Great Decisions

Mary Helen Dunn
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League sponsors forum on ballot measures

The LWVCC hosted a forum March 5 on the two ballot initiatives set for the March 24 special election in Salida. About 50 people attended the event. The measures focus on how the city of Salida uses its sales tax revenue to fund capital improvements.



Proponents of 2015-2: Shawn Gillis, Jim Miller and Bob Grether.

LWVCC member Melissa Smith moderated the forum and Shawn Gillis, Bob Grether, and Jim Miller represented those in support of 2015-2 (the city council's measure) and Jeff Auxier, Billy Carlisle and Monika Griesenbek represented those supporting the Carlisle/Farney initiative.



Proponents of 2014-28: Jeff Auxier, Billy Carlisle and Monika Griesenbek.

The council measure's supporters spoke first and described the city's achievements in improving not only streets but other infrastructure since the passage of measure 2A in 2008 that allocated a 1 percent increase in the city's sales tax revenue to capital improvements. Grether said the council's 2015 measure is fair and balanced and provides transparency in the budgeting process. He explained the proposed council work session version would set aside 35 percent of the city's total (3 percent) sales tax revenue for capital. A minimum of \$1 million or 60 percent would go to streets, alleys and sidewalks.

Proponents of the Carlisle/Farney amendment (2014-28) explained that their proposal would allocate 75 percent of the 2A funds (the 1 percent sales tax increase approved in 2008) "to replace, repair or improve streets and the water or sewer lines underlying or running along those streets, and to replace, repair, improve or newly install or construct sidewalks, street curbs, gutters, or storm drainage systems underlying or running along those streets." They expressed frustration at the other sides' lack of openness and failure to follow through on the 2A mandates.

Following opening statements, the two groups argued numbers and fiscal problems created by the opposing sides' measures. The participants answered several questions posed by the audience. The forum can be viewed on the league's Web site at www.lwvchaffeeounty.org/forums/. Thanks to league member Myra Barrett for organizing the forum and all the members who volunteered the night of the event.



Membership

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Melissa Smith*

Voter Service

Marjie Gray*
Tracy Craig
Rose Mirich
Libby Fay
Mary Helen Dunn
Scott Hartman
Elizabeth Ritchie
Eileen Rogers
Karen Dils
Carol Sanford

Facility Coordinators

Jeanne Younghaus*
Tracy Craig

Publicity/Social Media

Deborah Lively*
Nancy Walters*

Hospitality

Betsey Downing
Mary Helen Dunn
Jan Scar*

Web Hosting/Design

Gail Brooks
Deborah Lively*

Video

Gail Brooks
Reed Dils
Deborah Lively*

Bylaws

Jan Scar*
Jenny Davis
Marjie Gray

*Indicates board contact

**A BIG THANK YOU
to everyone who volunteers!**

March program to focus on water plan

On March 16 the LWVCC will host an educational program on Colorado water issues. The program will be at the United Methodist Church, 228 E. 4th St. in Salida and begin at 11 a.m. with a social gathering followed by the speaker at noon and will conclude at 1:30 p.m.



In December 2014 the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) released a draft water plan. The plan offers strategies, policies and actions for dealing with the state’s water issues. The CWCB is currently seeking public comment on the draft plan. A copy of the plan and more information can be found at www.coloradowaterplan.org.

Additionally, the University of Colorado is offering a free college-level class on all aspects of water issues in the Western States. Follow this link for more information - <http://www.mountainwestnews.org/Page3.aspx?a=ALookAhead&ID=103>.

Items of note...

Subscribe now to the LWVCO’s 2015 *Legislative Letter* and keep informed on the happenings of the Colorado General Assembly. The cost of a subscription is \$20 and can be paid by check or Pay Pal. Visit www.lwvcolorado.org/news.html#legconf.

The next Great Decisions discussion will be Thursday, March 12 at the Congregational Church on Crossman Ave. in Buena Vista at 4:30 pm. The topic will be “India Changes Course.” This topic will be followed by “U.S. Policy toward Africa” at the Buena Vista Public Library on Thursday, March 26 at 4:30 p.m.

Need a ride? Carpooling is available for the LWVCC’s monthly meetings. Members should meet at the public parking lot next to Safeway in Salida at 10:30 a.m. for a ride to Buena Vista. From Buena Vista members can meet at the CUCC parking lot at 10:30 a.m. for travel to programs in Salida.