

September 2011



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

Manhattan/Riley County

PO Box 834, Manhattan, KS 66505; E-mail: lww.manhattankans@gmail.com; Website: lww.manhattankans.org

Message from the Co-Presidents

What should be the role of the federal government in PreK through grade 12 public education? Join the education study consensus discussions. They will be in two parts.

Attend the first session on Tuesday, September 27 at Radina's in Aggieville, or Thursday, September 29 at Meadowlark in the living room.

The second session will be on October 18 at Radina's in Aggieville or October 20 at Meadowlark in the living room. Background material was provided in in the August and September League of Women Voters of Kansas Voters or you can go to www.LWVK.org to read documents for this national League study.

The scope of the study addresses the history, funding, and equity issues which are addressed under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and the common core standards/assessments which are required for many Federal grant programs, but are national, not federal.

We all have opinions about the education of our children. Become a part of this important debate.

On Saturday August 20, Enell and Katha Hurt attended the State Finance Committee Study meeting in Topeka. You will be hearing more about this very timely and exciting State study item.

Several Faculty members and students were able to distribute the LWVUS "VOTE" pamphlet to leaders of campus organizations during the Union festival on Thursday, August 25.

If you know of any students or faculty members who would like to participate in a League campus organization please let Enell or Jean know. We would like to have a very active group on campus to help with registration of new voters and to participate in the exciting discussion items that will be coming.

Your co-presidents also attended a LWVUS Membership and Leadership training workshop held here in Manhattan on August 26 and 27.

***Enell Foerster & Jean Lee
Co-Presidents***



Did you know the League of Women Voters can be found on Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, and Twitter. Just search "League of Women Voters." Not only will you find LWVUS, but you will also find other Leagues from across the country sharing their news and information with these social media tools.

LWV-Kansas Position Statement

Living Wage & Childcare

The state position on living wage was adopted in September 2000. Our local position on childcare was adopted in March 1988.

LIVING WAGE STATEMENT OF

POSITION: It is reasonable to expect government and for-profit businesses that receive tax incentives and/or other public funds to pay a living wage in order to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency. Other businesses should be encouraged to do likewise.

A living wage should provide sufficient income without government assistance, for food, clothing, housing, energy, transportation, health care, education, child care, and a small amount of discretionary income.

The state should set minimum standards for a living wage for state employees. Additionally, laws should be enacted that enable communities to establish living wage ordinances for local government employees and private enterprises

that receive public tax money. The LWVK opposes legislation that prohibits such local action.

The state should establish a minimum wage for all workers that adequately reflects the actual cost of living in the state, at least to the minimum level established by the federal government. Implementation of a living wage will take time and until that goal is achieved the LWVK continues to support government assistance to the working poor. Assistance programs may include but not be limited to:

1. Refundable state earned income tax credits,
2. Fair unemployment insurance,
3. Tax credits for child care expenses,
4. Health insurance, and
5. Elimination of sales tax on food.

CHILDCARE IN MANHATTAN

STATEMENT OF POSITION: The League of Women Voters of Manhattan/Riley County concurs with the following definition of quality childcare, as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that accredits childcare programs nationally:

A high-quality, early childhood program is one that meets the needs of and promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of the children and adults, parents, staff, and administrators who are involved in the program. Each day of a child's life is viewed as leading toward the growth and development of a healthy, intelligent, and contributing member of society.

The LWVM-RC believes that all children, regardless of age, are entitled to quality childcare. To ensure high quality childcare the

League supports policies that:

1. Educate and inform families on what constitutes acceptable child care and where to find it in our community;
2. Advocate that childcare workers be paid appropriately so as to attract and hold well-qualified personnel;
3. Encourage local government (School Board, City and County Commissions, Health Board) to cooperate in making available accessible and affordable quality childcare options for children of all ages;
4. Encourage private businesses and business organizations to include good childcare as an essential component of effective community economic development; and
5. Encourage local legislators to treat quality and affordable childcare as vital to community well-being by providing legislation to adequately assist families in meeting their childcare needs, for example

League of Women Voters of Kansas

Fall League Day

SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 24, 2011
8:30 AM – 2:30 PM

CAPITOL PLAZA HOTEL
1717 SW Topeka Blvd.
Topeka KS 66612

8:30 – Emerald Room 2 -- Donuts and Coffee or Tea

9:00 – Emerald Room 1 **Kansas Taxes—Who Should Pay (LWVK Study)**
Panel of Experts / Questions and Answer

10:00 -- Break

10:15 – Emerald Room 1 -- **Kansas Taxes—Who Should Pay**
Small Group : How would the elimination of income tax affect Kansans

11:15 - Break

11:30 - Emerald Room 2 -- Luncheon
Luncheon Speaker-- **Role of the Federal Gov. in Public Education?**
Dr. Diana Cabbage – Retired Superintendent and Educ. Consultant

12:30– Emerald Room 1 -- *Grow YOUR Dynamic League—*
LWV Is Needed in These Times - Ks Leadership Coaching Team

2:30 – Adjournment (LWVK Board Meeting following)

LEAGUE DAY – SEPT 24, 2011 SEND CHECKS TO
LWVK
PO BOX 2366
TOPEKA KS. 66604

League name _____

PAYMENT Check(s) Amount **\$30** each x _____

PARTICIPANT 1. _____

PARTICIPANT 1. _____

The Clean Air Promise Campaign of LWV-US

The League of Women Voters is asking members of Congress, respected community leaders and citizens around the country to promise to protect the health of children and families from air pollution.

This is a social commitment that we make to each other and which we depend on our elected officials in Congress to carry out and safeguard. Go here to see the US League's TV Video that has run on national cable channels since 7/23/11 <http://www.youtube.com/Leagueofwomenvoters>

From President Elizabeth MacNamara of the LWV US to all League Leaders and members,

As you probably know the League has begun the **Clean Air Promise** project, an exciting new way we're working for clean air. A number of state and local Leagues have already started to urge their Governors, Senators, Representatives and grasstops in their area to make the Promise. The League has been a leader in enacting, improving and protecting the Clean Air Act for decades and the promise is a our newest effort to continue our special role in protecting public health through this historic law.

For too long, the debate has focused on "overregulation" and featured false assertions that environmental protections hurt our economy. The "**Clean Air Promise**" is an issue campaign aimed at changing the debate over the Clean Air Act to one focused on protecting public health. By unifying our message to one on public health – one that encompasses all the key issues from smog to toxics to carbon pollution – we can win this debate **and stop politicians from destroying the Clean Air Act.** Throughout this effort, there will be broad public and media outreach to be sure that everyone understands our commitment to protecting the public health and clean air.

Please take this "Clean Air Promise" to town hall meetings and ask your members of Congress to make the promise to protect America's children and families from dangerous air pollution. When you see members of Congress at other public events, ask them to

make the promise. Organize a group of League members or other concerned individuals to visit with Senators and Representatives and ask them to make the promise. Reach out to key elected officials, community leaders, your friends, family and the general public, asking them to make the promise. And, go to the LWV's special website, PeopleNotPolluters.org, and make the promise yourself.

The LWVUS is working to make sure all Leagues are prepared with as many materials as will be needed to make the project successful. We've already shared a number of items over the last few weeks. All of these messages were sent to state and local presidents, with the exception of those where state League presidents requested that they be the ones to communicate with their local leaders. This message will also go to that group. In case you missed those materials I'll recap them for you. We introduced the project in a webinar in July. That conversation was recorded and you can watch the webinar in its entirety. The following week I sent state and local presidents an email with some materials you can use to begin asking your officials and people in your community to make the promise. Those materials can be found on the League's website. Included in that portfolio is a project overview, talking points and a number of facts sheets. The fact sheet that discusses the ozone rule is not up-to-date but is intended to help you explain that rule to others. The rest of those materials are up-to-date and available for you to share with others. Please do not share the project overview or the talking points documents in their entirety. Those are for internal purposes only.

LWVUS Clean Air Campaign Promise cont.

Today I want to share some additional project materials with you. We have posted them all on the internet.

1. Asking Your Governor, Senators or Representative to Make the Promise In a Personal Meeting

Take this “Clean Air Promise” to your Governors, Senators and Representatives and any other elected officials in your community. Make a direct ask of them that they make the promise to protect America’s children and families from dangerous air pollution. This fact sheet will help you to prepare for your personal meetings.

2. Asking Grasstops to Make the Promise In a Personal Meeting

A grasstop is simply a person who is considered a leader in your community. For instance, a state or local League President is a grasstop. Grasstops can be local business people, heads of local organizations, campaign contributors to an official, ministers or influential former state legislators. A grasstop’s connections to elected officials can make or break a project like the promise campaign. We’re asking you to recruit grasstops outside the League for this project, ask them to make the promise and engage them in meetings with elected officials. Check out this news story from an event in Holyoke, Massachusetts where local community members and grasstops made the promise.

3. Attending Town Halls

Most League members and leaders have at-

tended some type of meeting in their community. If you haven’t, with some simple preparation, you’ll be ready to make your case with ease. Do not miss the opportunity to go to town halls and ask elected officials to make the Clean Air Promise.

4. Letters to the Editor

As you begin to make plans for approaching elected officials and community leaders about making the promise, consider submitting a letter to the editor to your local and state news outlets. Read the sample letters to the editors developed for the campaign, tailor them to your community and send them in to get published. Or develop an original letter to the editor based on the other supporting materials included in this email package.

As leaders in your communities and in League, I would like to thank you for your commitment to protecting the public health and environment and for all of your hard grassroots work to advance those protections. Your feedback on what you need from LWVUS to be successful in this work has been invaluable as we are moving this important work forward. If you have any questions about these materials or the clean air promise, please contact Christina Hildebidle at CHildebidle@lww.org.

In League,
Elisabeth
League of Women Voters

Kansas League websites

- Emporia — <http://emporia.lww.org/>
- Great Bend — <http://greatbend.ks.lwvnet.org/>
- Johnson County—<http://lwvjoco.wordpress.com/>
- Lawrence/Douglas County—<http://lawrenceleague.com/index.html>
- Salina—<http://www.lwvofsalinaks.com/>
- Topeka—<http://www.lwvtsc.org/>
- Wichita—<http://www.lwvwichita.org/>

Observer Reports—

USD 383 Board of Education—Kathy Dzewaltowski, Observer

Please note that observer reports are posted on a regular basis on our blog which can be found at www.lwvmanhattanks.blogspot.com.

Current as well as previous reports are available on the site.

July 27, 2011

Special meeting:

The board held a special meeting to discuss mill levy options for the 2011-12 budget.

Option 1 kept the capital outlay mill levy unchanged from the previous year at 4.0 mills, Option 2 would set the capital outlay mill levy at 5.3 mills, and Option 3 would set the capital outlay mill levy at 6.0 mills. The board was provided with information that outlined the capital outlay projects that could be funded with the different mill options. Darell Edie said that 4.0 mills is unacceptable, and he would prefer at least 5.3 mills. Other board members expressed similar support for Options 2 or 3. Several board members also expressed concerns about Amanda Arnold's aging HVAC system and the need to set aside and accumulate funds for replacing the unit.

Walt Pesaresi also suggested an option that would raise the Local Option Budget (LOB) by 1% because funds generated for the General Fund would have more flexibility and could be used for salaries or health care costs in addition to being able to be used for capital outlay.

Doug Messer said he was hesitant to increase the LOB because the board's philosophy had been to hold back on raising the LOB in order to save it for "a rainy day."

The board will discuss the various mill levy options and the increase to the LOB option at its Aug. 3 meeting with the plan to have a public hearing on the budget on Aug. 17.

Aug. 3, 2011

Regular meeting:

Carol Adams, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, provided the board with a

preliminary report on how the district had performed on state assessments. The majority of the district's schools achieved "adequate yearly progress" (AYP) with only a few exceptions. The schools that did not achieve AYP included Amanda Arnold Elementary in math for students with disabilities, Marlatt Elementary in math for students who qualify for free or reduced lunch and for students with disabilities, and MHS in math for students who qualify for free or reduced lunch. The district's minority students also showed significant gains in math scores, although they did not show the same gains in reading. Pete Paukstelis commented that he noticed the scores for minority students have improved since the district hired a Diversity Coordinator, and he wanted to know if the improved scores could be attributed to the coordinator. The board eliminated the Diversity Coordinator position due to budget constraints, and Paukstelis said all of the data will need to be looked at carefully to determine if the coordinator position should be reinstated.

The board was presented with information regarding the status of the construction project at Wilson Elementary. The project is behind schedule, and the district's program manager reported that the contractor has made a concerted effort to catch up. Even so, eight classrooms will likely not be ready for the start of school. Administration presented the board with a plan for housing Wilson's students. Students in grades K-2 will be housed at Wilson, grades 3-4 will go to Northview, and students in grades 5-6 will go to Eisenhower Middle School. The temporary locations were anticipated to be needed for only a couple of weeks. Walt Pesaresi said that the situation isn't fair to the teachers and students who will have to pack up and move classrooms more than once. Several Wilson parents addressed the board expressing their concerns, particularly for the students being sent to Eisenhower, about how their students would

USD 383 Board of Education cont.

use the library, have recess (no playground at Eisenhower), share lunch with older students, and have their days lengthened due to the added busing time.

Board members discussed the 2011-12 budget. The options the board discussed varied in the mill levy amount for capital outlay: Option 1 set the capital outlay mill levy at 4.0 mills, Option 2 was 5.3 mills, and Option 3 was 6.0 mills. A fourth option would raise the Local Option Budget 1%. A majority of the board favored Option 3 with a capital outlay mill levy of 6.0 mills. Dave Colburn said Option 3 would allow the board to set aside funds to replace Amanda Arnold's HVAC system or to acquire property for the site of a future elementary school. Paukstelis agreed, saying the board had vowed during the bond campaign to take better care of its facilities in a planned, deliberate way. Pesaresi said he could support Option 1 or Option 2, but he could not support Option 3 because it represented too much of a tax increase. Doug Messer said he also supported Option 3, although he said he might support one of the other options. Once the board approves publishing the proposed budget, it has the option to adopt a lower mill levy, but it can't go higher once the public hearing date has been set. The board approved 5-1 to authorize the publication of the proposed budget and set the public hearing for Aug. 17. Pesaresi dissented.

Aug. 17, 2011

Work session:

The board held a work session to discuss issues with the construction projects at Wilson and Roosevelt Elementary Schools. The project at Wilson had fallen behind schedule and will not be completely finished when school starts Aug. 24. Classrooms for grades K-2 will be ready, not all of the classrooms for 6th grade will be ready, and the readiness of the classrooms for grades 3-5 was uncertain. The program manager was hopeful

that Wilson would receive a temporary certificate of occupancy such that grades K-5 would be able to meet at Wilson, and only 6th grade would need to be temporarily housed at Northview. At Roosevelt, the 1983 addition will be ready for school, and the other classrooms will be housed in mobile units on site. For both schools, administration recommended delaying the start of classes until Aug. 26 for student safety, and also to allow more time for furniture to be moved in and for teachers to set up their classrooms.

Public hearing for 2011-12 budget:

Amanda Arnold's principal and PTO president spoke about the need for a proposed curb cut to improve safety for a student drop off/pick up area. No other members of the public addressed the board regarding the proposed budget.

Regular meeting:

The board continued its discussion of Roosevelt's construction project that had begun in the work session. Roosevelt will need structural repairs after cracks were discovered in its concrete floors. The program manager reported that the contractor was still in the process of determining the cost of the structural work, but the program manager believed that the cost will be able to be covered by the existing bond funds. The board approved 6-0 to delay the starting date for Wilson and Roosevelt until Aug. 26, primarily for student safety.

Board members discussed the 2011-12 budget and the option of setting the overall mill levy at 51.625 mills, which included a capital outlay mill levy of 6.0 mills. Board members Dave Colburn, Pete Paukstelis, Curt Herrman (who joined the meeting via telephone), Doug Messer, and Darell Edie expressed similar thoughts that the capital outlay levy needed to be set at 6.0 mills in order to address projects needing attention rather than delay them. Walt Pesaresi disagreed because he felt 6.0 mills

USD 383 Board of Education cont.

represented too much of a tax increase and that the \$1 million the district has in capital outlay reserves could be used if an emergency repair were needed. Paukstelis pointed out that the \$1 million in reserve is used to cash flow projects and isn't sitting idle. Paukstelis also thought capital outlay had not been adequately funded for the past four years, and the board needed to

start taking steps to take care of its buildings. The board approved 6-1 to adopt a total budget authority of \$86 million with a total levy of 51.625 mills. Pesaresi dissented.

Riley-County Manhattan Health Board—Sue Cohen, Observer

July 27, 2011 Board of Health

Michelle Markvicka provided the Department Highlight for the education of the Board. She is the receptionist for the Family Connections Clinic, Women, Infants and Children federal program (WIC), as well as Smart Start, which provides visits to new mothers and infants. She has been with the Health Department for three years, and that experience has enabled her to take on the many tasks related to these programs. She noted that she is the point of contact for people seeking services, making 150 referrals weekly and directing them to the right place, which requires her to know a great deal about each service. She also does a lot of charting and entering of data as well as alerting the clinic nurses to problems. Essentially, she is so much more than a receptionist.

The treasurer's report touched on the ongoing transfer of the Health Department to the county. Charles Murphy, Director, reported nearly daily meetings to work out the transfer of the so-called "reserve funds" from CD's to money market funds. The city does have the right to them but have stated that all Health Department funds will go to the county. Karen McCulloh stated that she has the legal department working on this. The ongoing meetings with the county have been working on transferring the Health Department to the county policies relating to salary, benefits, etc. An educational session with the staff will be held when the transfer is completed.

The city has removed the segments of the code that required the Board of Health to enforce the nuisance ordinance. Nuisances will now be addressed by the city staff. The Health Department and the County Counselor are completing a state statute study to reaffirm the roles and requirements of the County Health Officer as well as the new County Board of Health.

Since Early Head Start has lost its funding, space is now available at the former Wharton Manor building. USD 383 has requested space for their Infant/Toddler Developmental Services program. The lease for the building is ending so that new rental rates need to be developed. The Board approved renting the space to USD 383.

Brady Burton, President of the Board, asked if there were any problems on the horizon, which led to a discussion of the immunization clinics that will be held at each school during August registration. The clinics will be open 12 hours in order to encourage and help with required immunizations. Dr. Paul Benne stated that there had been a case of pertussis here (whooping cough). He also stated he had a great deal of concern about meningitis. Dr. Derek Moser noted that there had been an increase in rabies, and that the present drought and heat were causing animals to enter town in search of water.

Next on the agenda was the question of how to handle the administrator position. The Board

Riley-County Manhattan Health Board cont.

went into executive session for 25 minutes to determine this. For the time being, the decision was to continue the search for a new administrator rather than appoint an interim administrator.

Discussion of the Board's future led to the indication that the present Board members would

not be interested in remaining on as an advisory board only and would only serve if the Board continued to have "teeth." Karen McCulloh stated that she would consult with the County Counselor as to how to charter such a board.

Riley County Commission—Julie Merklin, Lyndal Nyberg, Joan Strickler

July 28, 2011

Joan Strickler, Observer

All Commissioners present.

The official hearing on the budget will be at the regular August 15th meeting. The budget will be published in the *Mercury* before the hearing.

Commissioner McCulloh reported on the Riley County Health Board meeting she attended on Wednesday and said that there have been some applications for the position of head of the department.

Barry Wilkerson, County Atty., said that his department has hired a new attorney to replace one that left. With school beginning, there will be more activity to deal with. The stresses of the heat this summer have had the effect of increasing the number of people with mental health problems, and resources at Osawatomie State Hospital are limited. They can only keep people in the hospital a few days and then must return them to their community with the result that they often end up being kept in jails. There are no tax savings, and no help for these patients or the communities they return to.

Robert Nall, Information Technology Director, told the commissioners that the Health Department computers will eventually have to be replaced; they have a mix of machines acquired over time when grant money was available. It will be much more efficient when

all machines are the same as the rest of the county computers, upgrades can be coordinated, and repair simplified in the future.

Jennifer Wilson, County Extension Director, reported on the county fair. It went well despite the heat. There were 398 open class entries, which was up 38 from last year. The commercial/organizational booth spaces sold out, generating \$9,670. These funds will be set aside to help pay for fair grounds improvements.

Steve French reported that the Kaw Valley Rodeo Association had no problems with beer sales (as far as violations of minimum age, etc.). The total attendance for the rodeo was 5,027, which was up slightly over the five-year average of 5,015.

The 2012 fair is scheduled for July 26-30.

Aug. 11, 2011

Lyndal Nyberg, Observer

Mr. Lewis was absent.

After routine business, Lyle Butler, Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce, updated Commissioners on economic development. Ms. McCulloh suggested that Riley County could do well to discuss development with neighboring counties instead of competing with tax concessions, etc. Butler said the average citizen is not aware of city and county boundaries when shopping for goods or

Riley County Commission cont.

services. When jobs are created in Pottawatomie County, Manhattan and Riley County also benefit.

A 2010 survey of 366 metropolitan statistical areas showed the four with the fastest personal income growth: Elizabethtown, KY; Lawton, OK; Manhattan, KS; and Hinesville, GA. All of these communities are near military installations, which had significant earnings growth in 2010. Butler emphasized that Manhattan's economic success is a result of policies begun in the last 10 years, e.g. the K-18 project was proposed in the early '90s. The Department of Defense has also raised military salaries recently, and KSU is growing in the research areas. The airport expansion was planned for many years. Ms. McCulloh pointed out that faculty at KSU have had no raises for 3 years. New hires are sometimes earning more than long-time faculty.

Ms. McCulloh also mentioned that the county has had inquiries from NBAF about aTa bus. NBAF proposes having about 500 employees in need of public transportation. Butler said a recent gathering of economists agreed that public transportation will become increasingly necessary as energy prices rise.

Eileen King, Treasurer, gave her monthly financial reports. Investment income is at 57.05% of budget, with 58% of the year expired. The interest rate on checking is 0.03%, and on one-year investments the interest rate is 0.65%. The July report of sales tax (May sales) was \$248,487.44. This makes to-date, 74.45% of annual budget. Counting all sources of revenue after distributions, the county received \$429,496, which is 3.07% above budget.

Clancy Holeman, County Counselor/Dir. of Admin. Services, reported on the meeting of the Legislative Policy Committee. He mentioned a tipping fee for KDHE to be raised \$1 per ton, with the proceeds to go into a state

pool. Credit card payment for county services is near approval. The Farm Bureau is preparing a proposal for a bill to remove county commissions from the duty of soil erosion inspections, except perhaps in emergencies. Johnson County has proposed a bill permitting counties to perform emergency repairs to roads and bridges without the bidding process. The next meeting of the committee is Sept 23rd.

Holeman distributed to Commissioners a proposal amending the Form Quarantine Orders, which originally were formulated when TB was a common health problem. RCPD and the Health Department have been working together to clarify methods of protecting law enforcement officers as well as persons being quarantined. The designated Health Officer (presently the Director of the Health Department) is empowered to deal with epidemics and may need to direct enforcement by RCPD personnel. Obviously, cooperation is of paramount importance. Commissioners approved the proposed procedures 2-0.

Rich Vargo, County Clerk, reported on meetings of county officials with representatives of the Health Department on Aug. 9th and Aug. 11th. The county is making every effort to reassure Health Department employees that their positions will be protected through the transition. During the transition, health insurance is being adjusted: employees of the county pay a small part of their insurance (which Health Dept. employees have not done), and Health Department employees will receive coverage, including dental and vision for only slightly more. The county is carefully studying policies on sick leave and annual leave to ensure fairness. Classification adjustments to pay increases are being made so as to place people properly and not to deprive anyone. Vargo will be meeting with the County Auditor to discuss the accounting system of the Health Department and how it will be either integrated or set up as a "Fund Entity" system. Ms. McCulloh suggested that

Riley County Commission cont.

Vargo keep a record of the overload in his duties as he is overseeing these transition issues so he can be compensated.

Aug. 22, 2011

Joan Strickler, Observer

All Commissioners present, McCulloh presiding.

Commissioners agreed to sign a contract with the McGrath Consulting Group, Inc., to conduct a classification and compensation study for the Public Health Department. McGrath previously provided a study of the county and city positions.

County Clerk Rich Vargo assisted in a work session regarding redistricting of the Commission. Three options were considered. The Commissioners indicated a preference for option number 2, and a public hearing will be held in September prior to any finalization of a redistricting plan.

Tim Hegarty gave a Riley County Police Department update. He warned that students in particular should lock their cars and keep valuables out of sight. He warned that most burglaries occur during the day and urged people to report suspicious movement of items out of houses and apartments. He also noted that students are having some problems getting used to the roundabout on Bluemont Avenue.

The new IRIS (Immediate Response Information System) is now in place and allows people to receive alerts on the communication devices they choose. Included in the choices are cell phones, work phones, email, text, as well as the NOAA All-hazards Radio. Recently added is the option to receive notification of Wildcat Creek Flood warnings. To receive such warnings, you may email lharrison@rileycountyks.gov and make the request. It will be necessary first to register for IRIS emergency notifications by going to www.rileycountyks.gov.

Emergency Management Director Pat Collins reported on some requests coming out of a study group on tenant safety issues. He noted some rental properties are in very good shape, but some are not. Tenants should check for smoke alarms, preferably located in each room and centrally connected. He said tenants are responsible for replacing batteries in alarms when needed. He recommended carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers both be present. It was noted there are people on Post who can help Fort Riley people who are experiencing rental problems, and help is available to students through K-State.

County Counselor Clancy Holeman provided a draft of a resolution for Commissioners to sign in support of maintaining Riley County in the 2nd Congressional District.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding the need to have a building code established for rural areas of the county. While most new construction appears to meet acceptable standards, some people are living in old boxcars or trailers lined up to form one residence.

Commissioner McCulloh strongly supported the need for such a building code. Commissioners Johnson and Lewis felt such a code would be unnecessarily costly and not needed at this time.

Julie Govert Walter with the North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging updated the Commissioners on the year's accomplishments. A total of 6,054 persons age 60 and above received services in the county. Services provide information and assistance with a variety of programs, including the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug program, energy assistance and housing. Other services make it possible for persons to remain in their own homes instead of nursing facilities.

Riley County Commission cont.

Aug. 25, 2011

Joan Strickler, observer
All Commissioners present, McCulloh
presiding.

Robert Nall introduced the Commissioners to the newly installed communication system in the Commission room. The system allows for persons with hearing impairments to use amplification earpieces and generally improves hearing for all persons attending meetings. A new video system allows more detailed visual presentations to be made.

The McGrath Consulting Group currently is working at the Health Department to prepare a salary reclassification analysis of employee positions. Commissioner McCulloh suggested this would be a time to consider restructuring the Health Board. Commissioner Lewis agreed, suggesting it might serve a more advisory role.

County Attorney Barry Wilkerson introduced a new attorney in his office, Barry Disney. Disney had previously worked in the office of Sedgwick County Attorney Nola Fulston and in the office of Attorney General Steve Six.

Wilkerson said large cuts to the coroner's budget in Shawnee County and the resulting resignation of their coroner will impact Riley County. Some of Riley County's autopsies have been done in Topeka and now would have to be sent to Kansas City. Wilkerson said

his office is dealing with four homicide cases at the present time. Problems continue in dealing with persons with mental illness. Due to the lack of hospital space, many of these people are in state prisons or on the streets. His office is experiencing delays in bringing cases to trial since the KBI is very slow in evaluating DNA samples and completing fingerprint analyses.

The date for the public hearing on Riley County redistricting has been set for Monday night, September 12, in the Commission Chamber.

Human Resource Manager Cindy Volanti reported department heads were requesting more feedback from the Commissioners on their evaluations. Commissioner McCulloh suggested Riley County initiate a process utilized at K-State. Once every five years, the staff in a department would be asked to evaluate their department head. It was generally agreed to initiate such a process.

Assistant County Counselor Craig Cox discussed plans to repave Lakewood, Driftwood and High Meadows Subdivisions. Each area will have a petition filed of the intent to repave subject to protest. To defeat plans for the repaving, more than one-half of the owners of property in the area must sign a protest.

Texas Redistricting Blatantly Illegal

Washington, DC—September 15, 2011—The League of Women Voters of the United States joined the League of Women Voters of Texas in urging Attorney General Eric Holder to reject the congressional redistricting plan submitted by the state of Texas on the grounds that it would disenfranchise minority voters and is in clear violation of the landmark Voting Rights Act.

“The Texas plan is by far the most extreme example of racial gerrymandering among all the redistricting proposals passed by lawmakers so far this year. This plan is blatantly designed to stifle the voices of minority voters in favor of locking in partisan gains,” said national League president Elisabeth MacNamara. “The Department of Justice needs to unequivocally object to this plan and tell the state to start over.”

Read the entire letter on the LWVUS website at:

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Press_Releases&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=17961

The League opposes Cantor's agenda

The League of Women Voters and coalition groups sent a letter to the House of Representatives opposing the suite of bills contained in House Majority Leader Eric Cantor's legislative agenda memo that would block the Clean Air Act's ability to clean-up life-threatening pollution. Here is the text of their letter.

September 7, 2011

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our millions of members, activists, and supporters, we urge you to oppose strongly the suite of bills contained in House Majority Leader Eric Cantor's legislative agenda memo that would block the EPA's ability to clean-up life-threatening pollution. This extreme, ideological agenda will not create jobs, but it will cost lives. It prioritizes the narrow interests of politically connected polluter industries over the broader goal of safeguarding the lives and health of our children, communities, and families.

Rep. Cantor's August 29th memo lays out his plan this fall to repeal a host of recent and/or upcoming environmental standards that will protect public health by limiting dangerous pollutants like toxic mercury, arsenic, soot, smog, carbon dioxide, and coal ash from the nation's largest pollution sources, including coal plants, oil refineries, and factories.

Let us be absolutely clear: sacrificing tens of thousands of American lives will not create more jobs. Poisoning the air our children and our families breathe will not stimulate the economy. Burdening the American people with hundreds of billions of dollars in health and welfare costs will not lead to sustained economic growth.

Instead, Majority Leader Cantor's so-called "jobs agenda" will sacrifice tens of thousands of American lives a year. It will lead to more heart attacks, more respiratory illnesses, and more children in the hospital hooked up to respirators. It will mean more exposure to toxic mercury, a brain poison that particularly impacts young children and the unborn.

The Cantor Agenda will also hurt the economy and make it tougher for families to make ends meet. It will force Americans to collectively miss millions of days of work each year to care for sick family members or for themselves. It will force Medicare and Medicaid to waste billions of taxpayer dollars treating preventable illness and disease caused by pollution, and will further burden American families and businesses with out-of-pocket medical costs and higher health insurance premiums.

Now more than ever, the American people need their members of Congress to work together to solve the nation's problems in a bipartisan manner. We urge you to reject these polluter-led Page 2 of 2 attacks on public health and instead focus on real solutions that grow the economy, not cost lives.

Sincerely,

Center for Biological Diversity
Clean Water Action
Earthjustice Environment
America Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Law and Policy Center
League of Conservation Voters
League of Women Voters
Natural Resources Defense Council
Sierra Club
Southern Environmental Law Center

MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
PO Box 835
Manhattan KS 66505

Email: lwv.manhattanks@gmail.com
Website: <http://lwv.manhattanks.org>

LEAGUE CALENDAR

Keeping up with the League

Saturday, September 24 — **State League Day** — Plaza Hotel, Topeka 8:30 a.m. -2:30 p.m.
Kick-off for the State Finance Study Item. See announcement on pg 3.

Tuesday, September 27; 4:15 p.m., Aggieville Radina's — first part National Education Study consensus meeting. Attend this meeting or the one on September 29th.

Thursday, September 29, 4:15 p.m., Meadowlark Living Room — first part National Education Study consensus meeting. Attend this meeting or the one on September 27th.

Thursday , October 6, 7:00 p.m. — Monthly Board meeting — Meadowlark Hills Living Room—members welcome.

Tuesday, October 18, 4:15 p.m., Aggieville Radina's — second part of National Education Study consensus meeting. Attend this meeting or the one on October 20th.

Thursday, October 20, 4:15 p.m., Meadowlark Living Room — second part of National Education Study consensus meeting. Attend this meeting or the one on October 18th.

Tuesday, November 3, 7:00 p.m. — Monthly Board meeting — 320 S. Delaware—members welcome.