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February 2005

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF BUTTE COUNTY
The League of Women Voters of Butte County
P.O. Box 965
Chico, CA 95927
530-895-VOTE

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	Carol Burr	343-1117
Publicity	Krista Gallwitz	345-8015
At Large	Kristin Cooper-Carter	
	Jan Dilg	566-1019

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*All League meetings are open to all League members.
 Forums and Panel Discussions open to the public, as well.*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- February 24, 2005,
Education Committee Meeting
 City Council meeting room #1,
 6:30-9:30 pm.
- March 10, 2005

North State Solar Energy Conference
Hosted by North State Renewable Energy
Contact: Terry Battle at 530.898.5963

April 17, 2005

Wine Tasting Fundraiser
Lakeside Pavilion in Chico

May 10, 2005

Annual Meeting

League of Women Voters of Butte County
P.O. Box 965
Chico, CA 95927
530-895-VOTE

Founded in 1920, the League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

Annual dues are \$50 for individuals, \$75 per household. If \$50 is prohibitive, please, Membership at 895-8683 to arrange another option.

Dues and contributions to the League of Women Voters are not tax-deductible, but contributions to the LWV Education Fund are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Day Phone: _____

Evening Phone: _____

Wine Tasting April 17th!!

You will soon receive a mailing of recipes and tickets for the **April 17 Wine Tasting at Lakeside Pavilion**. It is the only fundraiser we have and enables the League to be involved in promoting our goals. We count on each member to contribute to the success of this annual fundraiser!

Background

LAFCO is the Local Agency Formation Commissions established by the California Legislature in 1963 as spearheaded by Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Sr. This oversight organization was principally designed to study and make recommendations on the "misuse of land resources" and maintain city "boundaries" to support sustainable growth from a municipal services perspective. Consequently, LAFCO was originally labeled the "Boundary Commission" upon its inception.

According to LAFCO's Principal Planner, Stephen Lucas, the original intention of the Boundary commission was to prevent growth principally around a commercial corridor such as a major highway. Growth down these corridors would be most desirable to city officials due to the higher income generated from commercial development. However this design would be not advantageous from a city

services standpoint (i.e. fire, police, medical). Therefore LAFCO's objective is to permit local control of growth while exhibiting oversight of the intended growth. This oversight is conducted through the "Mayor's Selection Committee" comprised of the following public officials: two members of the Board of Supervisors, two elected city representatives, two special district representatives (i.e. water district, recreation district, vector control), and one public representative member (non-elected). The term of each member is a period of four years.

Butte County Local Agency Formation Commission

Currently the representatives in Butte County are: Jane Dolan, Kim Yamaguchi, Frank Cook (Gridley), Dan Wentland (Paradise), Al Beck (Vector Control), Dee Hunter (South Feather Water & Power), and Carl Leverenz (Attorney and member at large). The intention of such a broad group of members is to balance the interests of a seemingly diverse and conflicting county, city, and public district representatives. For example, what interest would the water district in a county have if a city wanted to expand its city annexation to include a wider area? The answer is the district would likely be concerned with feasibility if at all interested - thereby balancing the interest of the city's tax benefit for annexation with the districts ability to provide water to the proposed region.

Such an example is precisely what LAFCO is concerned with when providing oversight to the community. It is important to make a jurisdictional distinction for LAFCO. It is only in instances of proposed annexation that LAFCO approves or disapproves development as feasible from a public services perspective. If the project is not considered for annexation, LAFCO is not permitted to approve or disapprove the project. And even in instances where annexation is considered, LAFCO determines only that the entity (city, etc.) is capable of providing the services it claims. Additionally the annexation must already be contained in the entity's existing sphere of influence which

is determined by the entity's General Plan. However LAFCO will approve sphere of influence amendments using, as a principal determinant, the General Plan. In some cases such as in special districts, the sphere of influence and boundary are coterminous. That is to say they are precisely the same region. This is not to say that LAFCO is silent on other development matters in the county. LAFCO is in essence a clearinghouse for development information; coordinating interagency project approvals from local agency to agency and providing additional notices to affected areas as state law mandates.

Since 2000, LAFCO has been funded independent of the state budget with a recommended cost allocation of 33 percent from the cities, county, and special districts. Each segment funds prorate according to usage. The Legislature permits each county LAFCO to allocate cost according to their own needs so as to not burden a single segment with the 33 percent recommended allocation. For example special districts in this county are not beholden to a 33 percent share that could potentially cripple their budget. In Butte County, LAFCO's cost breakdown is allocated 45 percent to the 90 county service areas, 45 percent to the five incorporated cities, and 10 percent to the 41 special districts in the county.

Public Review Process

Because LAFCO largely represents the county as a whole with special interest on maintaining sustainability when annexation is considered, the public is notified when a section is requesting annexation. The typical procedure for annexation involves the requesting party and adjacent parties that are deemed affected. The state mandates who is at a minimum an affected party. Notice of requested annexation is provided to all residents/property owners within 300 feet with a minimum of 30 property owners. Obviously, there appears to be some leakage in terms of notification for those that are outside of 300 feet in, for example a rural area yet are not included in the 30 property owners or who are still considerably affected by the annexation. At present time there are no plans to amend this policy (Editor's note: In my estimation, there is no effective way to mandate each potential event and therefore needs to be subject to interpretation by the overseeing body).

It is important to note that by the time LAFCO is typically requested to approve the annexation, the plans for the annexation have already been prepared before the local planning commission, the city

planners, the community at large, and the architects/designers for a proposed development. LAFCO is essentially used as a final approval point. Obviously to reject a project or proposed annexation at this stage in the process would be devastating to all parties seeking the annexation. Because of this tradition of latent approval requests, LAFCO has created the perception of diffusing the authority of the entity seeking the change. Stephen Lucas has requested that the requesting department "get involved early" in the planning stages so that LAFCO can help facilitate the annexation and assist its approval. However, Lucas admits that beyond a certain point LAFCO is beholden to approve the project once the planning has reached a critical mass. There is currently no mandate to involve LAFCO at any stage of the planning.

"The smart developers come to us early" (to ensure their project will be designed within LAFCO guidelines), says Lucas. There needs to exist an element of cooperation and periodic audit to keep proposed projects in focus and in line for approval, rather than simply an accept or reject; particularly with the potential to rubber stamp a bad proposal simply because it has already been forced through the process to a point of no return.

The typical stages to a project annexation request are:

1. Complete (funds & application) application to city for proposed project submitted to city
2. Effective local agencies circulate for public comments
3. Environment Impact Report conducted (if required)
4. Tentative Map to City Planning for approval
5. Tentative Map to the City Council for approval
6. Tentative Map to LAFCO for approval
7. Application for Annexation to LAFCO by resolution from the Council
 - a. The County opens up pre-development phases to LAFCO

Stephen Lucas strongly encourages the effective government body and general public to become involved early in the process as well as petition LAFCO for an opinion on the proposed development or annexation. "We still issue an opinion" regardless of whether LAFCO is mandated to approve or disapprove a proposal. But it is essential that the requesting parties work with LAFCO early in the development stages rather than in the final approval stage.

-Randall Stone, *LWV Member*

Please respond promptly to the mailing by:

I. calling the food committee to let them know what recipe you will prepare;

- 1. selling your four tickets; and**
- 2. be ready to lend a hand on Sunday, April 17.**
- 3.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT HEATHER QUILICI AT
TQH@PACBELL.NET OR 566-9848.**

Get Involved!

The education committee will have a final meeting for the membership to approve the consensus questions/answers for the education study.

Date: February 24, 2005,

City Council meeting room #1, 6:30-9:30 pm.

Please join us, the more members that are involved, the better!

Nominating Committee Report

During the past several months, the Nominating Committee has been encouraging and soliciting BCLWV members to consider being nominated for the expiring positions on our Board. A huge thank you is in order for members who have committed themselves for nomination.

At the upcoming February Board meeting, the Nominating Committee will submit the proposed slate of nominees for the Board 2005-2007 positions. Following Board approval of the proposed slate, the slate of nominees will be included in the "Call to Annual Meeting" scheduled on May 10, 2005.

This year the expiring Board positions include three officers: President, First Vice President and Secretary; as well as five Board Directors. All terms for these positions commence Summer, 2005 and extend through May, 2007. The Nominating Committee still welcomes members interested and willing to serve on the Board. We especially need a nominee for the Action Director whose tasks include working with the Board in reviewing, responding and implementing action relating to local, state and National LWV positions. This Director position also address, as needed, government issues and LWV positions. If you are interested in this open Director position, or wish to be nominated for any other officer or Director position cited, please call Betsy Kruger at 345-7563 to discuss the tasks of such position.

Finally, while the "Call to Annual Meeting" will include a Board approved slate of nominees for the 2005-2007 terms, all expired positions remain open for further nominations from the floor at the Annual Meeting.

Thank you to all who have helped in our nomination efforts.

-Betsy Kruger, *Nominating Committee Chairperson*

NORTH STATE RENEWABLE ENERGY COLLABORATIVE TO HOST SOLAR CONFERENCE

Group actively transforming North State region into a leading center for solar energy

A group of Butte County public and private sector leaders that recently formed North State Renewable Energy (NSRE) will be hosting the first north state solar energy conference on March 10th 2005. The group, led by Chico State Provost Scott McNall and former-City Councilor Dan Nguyen-Tan, envisions a day full of useful information on the policies being promoted, the status of solar technology, with specific sessions for agriculture, local government, industry and new construction.

NSRE consists of representatives from major public and private entities, including the County of Butte, Sierra Nevada Brewery, Enloe Hospital, City of Chico, Chico Unified School District, Chico State, and many other private and public sector entities.

"All of us recognize that solar energy provides both bottom-line economic benefits and savings, as well as helps address increasing environmental health problems. We want to support those in our region with the most up-to-date information in support of the use of renewable resources" said Mark Stemen, professor of Environmental Studies

NSRE is partnering with Modesto-based Great Valley Center in hosting this event. If you are interested in attending the event, please contact: Terry Battle at 530.898.5963 or tbattle@csuchico.edu

League Contact: Kristin Cooper-Carter Kcooper-Carter@csuchico.edu

LAFCO: Local Agency Formation Commission
League of Women Voters History

1921

In the League. . .

Convention in Cleveland. League-supported Sheppard-Towner Act for welfare of mothers and infants enacted.

<http://www.lwv.org/about/pastfuture/timeline.html>

*If you would like to get your food assignment done early, the food committee will be getting together in February to make tiropetes. Don't worry, you don't need to know how to make them, they will teach you how!

Call Anne Rutherford at 345-3416
or email her at aharruth@aol.com