

# Kern Voter

A PUBLICATION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF KERN COUNTY

February/March 2009

## President's Message

**W**elcome returning and new members! As our nation faces economic crises, your support sends a strong message that the League's work is important. Since 1932 the LWV of Kern County has proudly served our community and is committed to bring you up to the moment information on issues at the local, state, and national level.

On Valentines Day, the League will celebrate 89 years of promoting democracy. The remarkable voter turnout for the November '08 presidential election provided us with the opportunity to reach out to many first-time voters. One of the ways we did that was to invite the community to join our members at the League's Program Planning Meeting last month. At that meeting we established our agenda for the next two years and gave direction to the League of Women Voters of California.

This traditional grassroots process directs the League to focus on issues that effectively utilize our time, talent and money. Some of the top issues you are concerned with are: health care; the state budget's impact on school districts and social services in Kern County; child obesity; prison systems; water; and alternative energy. Look for our final recommendations in the next Voter.

International Women's Day will be celebrated on March 8 at 6 pm at the Petroleum Club. The concept of International Women's Day began on March 8, 1857 when, during the industrial revolution, over 15,000 women walked out of factories demanding better working conditions and increased pay. Globally, this day is dedicated to the recognition of women's struggles and their progress toward equity and justice.

Kern County began celebrating International Women's Day in 2002 when the League joined with the American Association of University Women to recognize foreign-born women by honoring their contributions to Kern County. Join us for dinner and entertainment on March 8.

It has been a while since we talked about transportation. Now is the time to understand the urgency of transportation issues facing our county. The increase in congestion and the poor condition of our roads have a significant impact on the quality of life of our citizens. The League joined the Kern Transportation Foundation (KTF) in the production of an education video, *Crisis at the Crossroads*, to educate citizens about the urgency of transportation issues confronting Kern County. The video depicts the impact on our roads as population doubles, highlights areas of the county with severe road conditions, and reviews solutions to improve traffic and the movement of goods through the county.

The League will feature this video at the general meeting in April. If you would like to have a KTF representative present the video to an organization or group, please contact the Foundation office at 661/322-2872.

The Brown Act is a law which requires public officials to allow public access to meetings and to give the public an opportunity to speak. Working with community leaders, the League will offer a

workshop on the Brown Act for Kern County's elected officials in February. Information packets will be mailed to all elected officials in Kern County soon.—Diane Williams

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## Calendar

**February 10**—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVB Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K Street, Room UC-3.

**February 18**—Wednesday, 5:45 pm. Tiara Cox, District Representative from Congressman Jim Costa's office, will discuss Costa's current legislation and activities at our monthly general dinner meeting at the Petroleum Club, 5060 California Avenue. Cost is \$22. Reservations required by noon, February 16; call the League Line.\*

**March 8**—Sunday, 6 pm. **International Women's Day** dinner at the Petroleum Club, 5060 California Avenue, honoring the contributions of foreign born women to Kern County. Join with others from local organizations. Cost is \$40. Watch for your invitation in the mail.

**March 10**—Tuesday, 6:30 pm. LWVB Board meeting, Merced Center, 2000 K Street, Room UC-3.

**March 18**—Wednesday, 5:45 pm. Fifth District County Supervisor Michael Rubio will provide an up- date on the effects of the recession on Kern County projects at the monthly dinner meeting at the Petroleum Club. Cost is \$22. Please RSVP to the League Line\* by noon, March 16.

**Reminder:** General meeting are on the third Wednesday of the month. If you need transportation to a meeting, please leave that message on the League Line.

*Reservations are required for dinner and luncheon meetings and special events. Please call the League Line, 634-3773, by Monday noon prior to the Wednesday event. No charge for attendance at program only. Thank you.*

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## Hear Supervisor Michael Rubio at March general meeting

**F**ifth District Supervisor Michael Rubio is scheduled to be the guest speaker at the League's meeting on Wednesday, March 18. The dinner meeting begins at 5:45 pm at the Petroleum Club, 5060 California Avenue. Supervisor Rubio will discuss topics such as the impact of the economic recession on Kern County and his goal of establishing a 24 hour clinic for mothers and children at KMC Hospital. He will also provide an update on recent Kern County projects.

Born and raised in Kern County, Michael is a graduate of Shafter High. While working full time, he put himself through Bakersfield College and subsequently studied Justice Administration at the University of New Haven in Connecticut. Recognized for his outstanding scholarship, Michael was selected to work for the Department of Justice under President Bill Clinton.

Michael returned to Kern County with a job as an advocate for youth and led an agency that provided health insurance to underprivileged children. For four years, he worked for State Senator Dean Florez. In Florez's Sacramento office, Rubio worked on issues such as air quality in the San Joaquin Valley, opposition to sludge coming into Kern County from Los Angeles and other surrounding areas, as well as initiatives in education.

On March 2, 2004 Michael was elected to represent the Fifth Supervisorial District in Kern County and became the youngest elected supervisor in California. His affiliations are numerous, including chair of the Joint City/County Standing Committee to Combat Gang Violence and the San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies Policy Council. He is a strong advocate for greater accountability of KMC and its management to ensure that patients receive the best possible medical care.

Last July Rubio filed a notice of intent with the California Secretary of State's office to run for Dean Florez's state senate seat in 2010 when Florez's term expires.

Please call the League Line, 634-3773, for reservations by noon the preceding Monday.—Lynne Rosenstein

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### **STAY INFORMED**

**For current up-dated information, check the local, state, and national**

**League of Women Voters' websites:**

**[www.kerncounty.ca.lwvnet.org](http://www.kerncounty.ca.lwvnet.org)**

**[www.ca.lwv.org](http://www.ca.lwv.org)**

**[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)**

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## **Jim Costa's aide speaks at February meeting**

In January 2005, following a distinguished career as a member of the California State Senate, Jim Costa was sworn in as a Member of the House of Representatives. Raised on a dairy farm near Fresno, Costa is a third-generation family farmer. During his first term in office, he put together a broad-based bi-partisan plan aimed at developing a Regional Water Plan for Central California. He also led negotiations between the City of Fresno and the State of California that secured final funding for the Amtrak station in Fresno. Jim Costa has been an outspoken advocate for building High Speed Rail Systems in California.

As the principal author of legislation that established the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, Costa continues to work with state officials to clean up the Valley's air. He has received many awards for his contributions.

Because President Obama has ended the usual February recess for the Legislature, Congressman Costa had to cancel his personal appearance at our meeting. However, Tiara Cox, District Representative from his office, will be our guest speaker. She is bright, knowledgeable, and articulate, as well as entertaining. She will bring us up to date concerning Congressman Costa's activities and legislation. The meeting is scheduled for February 18<sup>th</sup> at the Petroleum Club at 5:45 pm. Please call the League Line for reservations.—Barbara Lovell

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## **Kern road projects on hold**

Our own LWVKC president Diane Williams is a member of the Board of Directors of the Kern Transportation Foundation. At our January League board meeting, she reported that, because of the current state budget deficits, several local transportation projects scheduled during the 2009-2012 fiscal years have been deferred. The following projects are on hold:

- Westside Parkway Phase 1 – Mohawk St from Truxtun Ave

- Westside Parkway Phase 2 – West of Coffee Rd to Mohawk St
- State Route 178/Rosedale Hwy widening from Allen Rd to SR 99 Environmental Phase
- State Route 17 at Morning Drive. Interchange improvements Environmental Phase
- Hageman Flyover – Hageman Road to State Route 99 Project Study

The state budget deficit has halted all transportation projects. Since the state does not have the funds to reimburse counties for these projects, the delay may be up to two years. In addition, the state has deferred selling \$20 billion bonds passed by voters in '06 under Proposition 1B.

Projects funded by the TRIP (Thomas Road Improvement Project) are on hold, also. Kern County needs to receive matching funds from the state in order to qualify for the TRIP funds and the state is not releasing matching funds at this time.—Lynne Rosenstein

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## **League offers Brown Act workshops to elected and appointed officials**

The LWV of Kern County is offering a workshop on the Brown Act to all public officials and citizens elected or appointed by elected officials to committees and agencies. The Brown Act requires public servants to maintain open meetings in California, to provide agenda information and notice of time and location of meetings prior to convening, and to make information and records available to the public.

Del Gardner and David Stanton are coordinating this effort which is offered by the League at no cost to participants.

Kern County has numerous public meetings administered by elected and appointed officials including water boards, school boards, committees that make decisions regarding land use and building development, homeowners' associations, and school site parent advisory committees. All of these and others are required to adhere to the Brown Act. Since the last time the League offered Brown Act workshops, there have been changes in code sections, case law and attorneys' general opinions.

Workshops are offered on two dates for the convenience of those who should attend. They will take place from 7 to 8:30 pm in the Kern County Superintendent of Schools Office Conference Room, 1300 17th Street in downtown Bakersfield on **Tuesday, February 24** and again on **Thursday, February 26**.

Those who wish to attend are asked to reserve their seat by calling the League Line, 634-3773. A copy of the Brown Act and other materials will be provided.—Del Gardner

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