



**School Board Candidates (from left): Greg Spradling, Kristy Rodri, Carla Mulkey, Julie Levy, Wendy Rice, Suzanne Carlson and Andrée Stetson (representing Stephanie Moran), preparing for the forum.**

### **Durango 9-R School Board Candidate Forum**

On October 20<sup>th</sup>, the League of Women Voters sponsored a candidate forum for the Durango 9-R School District Board in the Durango City Council Chambers. A generous contribution from ConocoPhillips made possible videotaping, webcasting and multiple rebroadcasts of the forum on CitySpan10. Seven candidates are competing for 4 seats with one of the candidates, incumbent Julie Levy, running unopposed in District D. The other candidates and districts they are running and competing in are:

District A  
 Greg Spradling  
 Kristy Rodri

District B  
 Carla Mulkey  
 Stephanie B. Moran

District G  
 Wendy Rice, incumbent  
 Suzanne F. Carlson

The forum was moderated by League member Carol Blatnick. District B candidate Stephanie Moran was absent because she was attending a state conference on adult education but was represented by Andre Stetson, who read opening and closing statements provided by Moran.

All of the candidates fielded numerous audience questions on topics ranging from what should the top three qualities of the new school superintendent be, to what is the role of the Board in dealing with curriculum issues, as well as their take on the controversy regarding the number of tests required for the No Child left Behind (NCLB) program.

On the testing issue, several candidates felt there were too many tests, some feeling that testing doesn't measure the whole child, that the classroom teacher knows best how a child is doing. Support for Colorado's growth model, which measures individual student growth from one year to the next, was expressed. Criticism of NCLB included the

questions as to whether it was doing what it was supposed to be doing and whether it was too strict in measuring schools.

The candidates were in agreement on charter schools as an option and that curriculum concerns should be handled by the superintendent. Various candidates expressed their ideas of the respective roles of the superintendent and of the Board.

All of the candidates expressed concern over the funding situation and the need to follow the district's strategic plan to give it time to work.

*-Gail Harris*



**League members (from left): President Trish Pegram (hidden), Voter Service Chair Stephanie Huss, moderator Carol Blatnick and Buck Skillen reviewing last minute details. Photos by Suzanne Becker.**