

League of the Year Nominee La Plata County (LWVLPC)

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Why should the La Plata League be the 2011 Colorado League of the year? Two words: growth and teamwork.

We have grown, not just in number of members but in the percentage of members who are involved in our activities. A comprehensive membership survey sent last year identified areas of interest for our members and the community. We have engaged different kinds of people from our community-ranchers, new retirees, Native Americans, environmentalists, tea party members, and students- and encouraged them to become more involved with our League. The incoming board of directors is made up entirely of members who joined the local league after 2002. We currently have five 50 year members, all of whom are active. Our League celebrated its 65th anniversary this year.

It takes a team of dedicated volunteers to run a League like La Plata. Let me share with you the accomplishments from 2009-2011:

Voter Service

Education of citizens is our mission and LWVLPC is depended on to provide candidate and ballot information for La Plata County and the surrounding towns of Bayfield, Ignacio and Durango. We held 17 forums in the past two years, encompassing every candidate from school board to Governor and in between. We covered the 2010 ballot issues in all three towns and taped the ballot issue forum for local cable television. We registered voters all over the county Here is a partial list:

- June-October Saturdays, Durango Farmer's Market – we bought a tent to sit at the Farmer's Market 3 to 4 times each season. We distribute information, register voters and chat with citizens
- October 15, 2009 Durango School District 9-R candidate forum*
- March 23, 2010 Candidate forum for Ignacio Trustee election
- April 6, 2010 Candidate forum for Bayfield Trustee election
- July 20, 2010 Candidate forum in Ignacio for August 10th primary election
- July 22, 2010 Candidate forum in Durango for August 10th primary election*
- September 18, 2010 Colorado Gubernatorial Candidate forum, co-sponsored with Fort Lewis College and the Associated Students of Fort Lewis College*
- September 30, 2010 Ballot issues presented by LWVLPC Speaker's Bureau in Durango*
- October 4, 2010 Candidate forum in Bayfield for local candidates

- October 6, 2010 Candidate forum in Ignacio for local candidates
- October 7, 2010 Candidate forum in Durango for local candidates*
- October 11, 2010 Ballot issues presented by LWV LPC Speaker's Bureau in Bayfield
- October 13, 2010 Ballot issues presented by LWV LPC Speaker's Bureau in Ignacio
- October 19, 2010 Candidate forum in Ignacio for Colorado State candidates
- October 20, 2010 County Commissioner Candidate forum at Southern Ute Events Center
- October 20, 2010 Candidate forum in Bayfield for Colorado State candidates
- October 21, 2010 Candidate forum in Durango for Colorado State candidates*
- March 16, 2011 Candidate forum for Durango City Council Election*

* Taped for broadcast on local cable channel

Census 2010

Our census committee worked with Community Counts to assist with Census 2010. We received a grant to purchase reusable grocery sacks that became very popular locally. We presented census facts to local organizations. We even marched in a local parade with the Census people. The committee was honored for their service.

Energy, Environment and Sustainability

We organized a new committee in 2009 called the Environment, Energy and Sustainability Committee, led by new member Deanna Collins. This group of committed individuals follows local, state and national oil and gas activity, actions by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and works for sustainable practices. We worked with the state leagues of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah and LWVUS to advocate for Clean Air in the Four Corners area. We have submitted comments to the EPA for the Navajo Generating Station, the Four Corners Power Plant and the San Juan Generating Station, all power plants in another state that blow pollutants into our airshed. We testified in person at two EPA hearings and kept in contact with LWVUS, coordinating testimony among the 4 state leagues. We met with the staffs of both U.S. Senators to add their support. Several programs were held:

- October 8, 2009 Four Corners Air Quality and Our Health- a panel of experts, co-sponsored with San Juan Citizen's Alliance and Mountain Studies Institute
- February 16, 2010 Nuclear Energy: Two Perspectives – a Look at Nuclear fission as a source of electricity for the future, co-sponsored with the San Juan Citizen's Alliance and the Fort Lewis College Environmental Center
- February 17, 2011 LWV LPC testified at the EPA hearing in Farmington NM for the San Juan Generating Station
- March 30, 2011 Climate and Energy Action Plan in Durango
- March 31, 2011 LWV LPC testified at the EPA hearing in Durango for the Four Corners Power Plant

Fiscal Reform

Our League has been involved with Colorado fiscal reform effort for many years and local League members spearheaded the La Plata County, Colorado Fiscal Responsibility Information Committee. This group continues to advocate for constitutional reform and an end to the budget problems that have plagued Colorado for years. The group is recognized as a leader in the state of Colorado. The League produced the following programs:

- September 1, 2009 The Colorado Budget Crisis with Carol Hedges of the Fiscal Policy Institute
- June 10, 2010 Presentation on Ballot Issues 60, 61 and 101, co-sponsored by the Fiscal Responsibility Information Committee and the Durango School District 9-R School Board
- October 12, 2010 Public Forum on Ballot Issues 60, 61 and 101 in Bayfield
- October 14, 2010 Public forum on Ballot Issues 60, 61 and 101 in Durango

Global Outreach

LWVLPC hosts a discussion group called Great Decisions sponsored by the Foreign Policy Association. It features eight international topics and begins in January and runs through April, twice weekly every other week. Schedules and topics are published each December. The program is jointly sponsored by the Durango Public Library and has brought us many new members.

Grant writing

We applied for and received several grants to cover a new projector, our ballot issue brochures, travel and other expenses.

Health Care

We have an active health care committee, who followed local, state and national health care issues closely. Three members of the League are on the board of the local Citizen's Health Advisory Committee and keep us informed of where and when to advocate for change. A summary of their programs:

- July 22, 2009 Health care forum with State Representative Ellen Roberts and local health care leaders.
- April 28, 2010 Health care meeting/forum with local Health Service Steering Committee
- September 22, 2010 Health Care reform: What it Means for Colorado, with the Colorado Center on Law and Policy

Legislative

We closely followed the Colorado Legislature and the United States Senate and House and sent emails and made phone calls to advocate for LWVUS, LWVCO and LWVLPC issues. We interviewed our State Senator and House Representative in order to understand them better and to send that information to LWVCO. We were so pleased with the result that we interviewed a

newly elected county commissioner and he was so pleased that he will be speaking at our annual meeting.

The LWVCO Legislative Action Letters are dissected by our chair, Ellen Park, sent to members with action alerts and then posted on our web site at http://www.lwvaplata.org/Legislation.html#LWVCO_News. Ellen also checks on particular bills when requested by our members. We hold our annual legislative lowdown once a year with our House Representative and State Senator. These events are always well attended by community members from both parties.

Newsletter/Web

We updated our website with a collection of information, including local, Colorado and national League news, newsletters, upcoming events, a local calendar, legislative information, as well as information about adopted programs and issues. The website is accessible to any web reader and averages over 10000 hits per month. Our county commissioners admit that they use our website for information.

Observer Corps

League members observe local meeting for the Durango City Council, Durango School District 9-R, La Plata County Comprehensive Plan,

Public relations

Our local newspaper, *The Durango Herald*, continues to honor our league with timely newspaper articles and op-eds, coverage of our events and an invitation to co-host their semi-annual Election Night Party, an event that raised our profile and netted our League a \$1000 contribution. The Sunday, April 17, 2011 *Durango Herald* will feature an Earth Day op-ed written by member Marilyn Brown. Our alternative newspaper, *The Telegraph*, has also begun publishing information about our candidate and educational forums.

State and National

LWVLPC realizes how important it is to stay involved with our state and national League. We participated in the following activities.

June 19-20, 2009	LWVCO Leadership Retreat in Frisco
June 30, 2009	LWVLPC board retreat. Conference call with Marcia Merrins of LWVUS
September 23, 2009	LWVCO Sustainability Study
September 26, 2009	LWVCO League Day in Denver
November 18, 2009	LWVUS Webinar-Program Planning
January 7, 2010	LWVUS Program Planning
January 25, 2010	LWVCO Legislative Conference in Denver
March 25, 2010	Sustainability Concurrence Meeting
May 19, 2010	LWVUS National Convention Webinar
May 21-22, 2010	LWVCO Council in Estes Park
June 11-15, 2010	LWVUS National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia

June 25-25, 2010	LWVCO Leadership Retreat in Frisco
September 25, 2010	LWVCO League Day in Denver
October 10, 2010	LWVUS Voter Services Webinar
January 19, 2011	LWVCO program planning in Durango
January 31, 2011	LWVCO Legislative Conference in Denver
March 17, 2010	LWVUS webinar on Making Annual Meetings Productive

Just for fun

We have an annual ski day. We do an annual meeting in May and a potluck brunch in December. We also participated in local forums for Denver TV access, air quality, County Comprehensive Plan and other events. We assist in local elections for La Plata Electric Association and the Durango High School student council. Several members participated in the Durango Public Library's Spoken Word Program doing a performance of member Judith Reynolds's *Living the Legacy: How the He-Man West Won the Vote for Women*.

Conclusion

The La Plata League has worked hard to promote the League's mission of advocacy and voter service. One of the ways we can improve our league is to celebrate our accomplishments, something we have not done. The award for Colorado League of the Year would be a fine start for us. We appreciate your consideration and thank the League of Women Voters of Colorado's board of directors for their service.