

February 2010

The Voter

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FEBRUARY 25, 2010 MEETING

Biofuels from Waste: Good Economics, Good for our Environment

David Lindon, Fleet Manager, City of Hoover

The LWVGB meeting this month - Thursday, February 25 from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM at the Homewood Library, room 101 - occurs as climate and energy legislation is stalled in the Senate, and, internationally, there were no binding agreements on climate protection in Copenhagen in December. President Obama has stated that creating clean energy jobs remains a crucial part of the administration's strategy to combat devastating unemployment and to restore American leadership in clean energy technology. Although Alabama has room for improvement, we can be proud of action at the local level.

David Lindon, Fleet Manager for the City of Hoover, will explain how sound economic decisions and some entrepreneurship continue to lead to savings for Hoover and to environmental improvements for the region. As one pollster has pointed out regarding the clean energy economy:

"If we do it right, we get cleaner air. We get less dependence on fossil fuels and enhanced national security. We get more innovation in our economy, more jobs and more sustainable jobs.

And that's if the Scientists are wrong.

If the Scientists are right, we get all of those things, and begin to solve what could be the most catastrophic environmental problem that any of us have ever faced.

That's a pretty good bet to make -- because it's a 'No Regrets' strategy. It doesn't mean it's easy. But it means if we do it, and do it right, we get all of those benefits out of this policy approach. We think that's why it's the right thing to do."

Come hear how Hoover is doing the right thing for economic reasons and because it's the right thing to do – and how that benefits us all.





WELCOME!!

We welcome our newest League members including:

Bobby Bailey, Birmingham
Beverly Rausch, Birmingham
Francine Jones, Pelham

Honor Your Friends and Loved Ones with a Gift to the Ed Fund to Celebrate the League's 90th Birthday

The League of Women Voters was founded in 1920 to help newly enfranchised women exercise their rights as voters. Ninety years later, the League is still fighting to improve our systems of government and impact public policies through citizen education and advocacy.

You can honor your friends and loved ones by making a donation in their names to the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham Education Fund in celebration of the League's 90th birthday. This fund works to encourage the active and informed participation of citizens in government and to increase understanding of major public policy issues.

For a tax-deductible donation of at least \$10 per name, the LWVGB will mail a commemorative "Nine Decades of Impact and Achievement" acknowledgement card to each of your honorees. There are two easy ways to donate. 1) Donate online at lwvgb.org, and e-mail the names and addresses of your honorees to apmcgriff@gmail.com; or 2) make checks payable to LWVAL Ed Fund, and mail along with the names and addresses of your honorees to: LWVGB, PO Box 320847, Birmingham, AL 35232. Please mark any children on your list so that they can be sent a special card designed just for them.

Please forward this information to anyone else who you think might be interested in participating.

McDonald's Musings

As I write this, Super Bowl XLIV is just starting. (I only watch the commercials.) But I can't help but wonder how things would be if the enthusiasm shown to football were directed to good government. Newspapers would print large sections on government issues and just mention sports in passing. People would read all of the public policy issues and skim the box scores. Children would grow up wanting to be political scientists and journalists instead of tight ends and cornerbacks. Candidates for office would not be let off the hook when they failed to answer questions.

But that is not the real world, so we in the League continue to try to interest citizens in the issues of the day, knowing full well that attention spans are short for politics. (sigh)

The League of Women Voters in Birmingham presents important issues to our members and the public, such as biofuels at our upcoming February 25 meeting. January's meeting on the Highway 280/northern beltway was excellent and attended by Leaguers and others.

So we plod on, preparing to compete next with March Madness!

JANUARY MEETING SUMMARY

At the LWVGB meeting on Wednesday, January 27, 2010, members and guests were brought up to date on major highway construction in our area. Recently, a three-city (Mtn. Brook, Homewood, and Vestavia) grassroots organization funded a study by the highway engineering & design firm Gladding-Jackson that focused on finding a way to reduce congestion on Highway 280 through limited interchanges. Guest speakers Temple Tutwiler and Phillip Morris, who represented that group, presented the plan. An ALDOT engineer, Brian Davis, brought us up to date on a new plan funded by ALDOT and planned by FIGG Engineering & Design that aims to improve congestion on Highway 280 with an elevated highway. In addition, Alison Howell and Renee Carter, representatives from the Birmingham Business Alliance (BBA), described the plans and progress of the Northern Beltway.

Attendees had many questions for the presenters expressing great interest in the route of the highways, sources of funding, ongoing costs to taxpayers and users, and environmental and commercial impact. Some noted that public transit alternatives were not a part of the plan and that the current outdated 1901 Alabama Constitution does not allow ALDOT funds to be used for this purpose.

The meeting was held in the Electra Room at Alabama Power, 600 North 18th Street in downtown Birmingham.



CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM UPDATE

ACCR has three pieces of legislation pending: Senator Smitherman has introduced SB177 that passed through the Constitution, Campaign Finance, Ethics & Elections Committee, 6 to 1. It will now go to the Rules Committee.

Speaker Pro Tem Demetrius Newton introduced HJR 54 (House Joint Resolution 54) in the House and it will go to the Rules Committee.

Senator Ted Little introduced Senate Joint Resolution 42 (SJR 42) It will go to the Rules Committee.

All instruments call for the people to vote on holding a constitutional convention to rewrite the 1901 Constitution. All information on ACCR is available on their website www.constitutionalreform.org

Alabama Transit Coalition

The ATC Steering Committee has compiled an updated list of ride providers which will be put into a spread sheet and made available online.

The next step is to get that information into a software program called RouteMatch so call centers (the 2-1-1 call centers) can make the information available to those who do not have internet, but call in to ask about ride providers in their area.

Stay tuned for more information.



February 2010

ALABAMA 1901 CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION FILM – “OPEN SECRET”

“Open Secret”, a filmed re-enactment of the Alabama 1901 Constitutional Convention will be screened as indicated below:

February 23rd at 6:30 p.m. at Department of Archives and History in Montgomery

February 26th at 6:30 p.m. at the Historic Carver Theatre in Birmingham

March 24th at 11:30am at the Birmingham League of Women Voters meeting

March 30th at noon at the Capitol Auditorium in Montgomery



League of Women Voters of Alabama joins Protect Forever Wild Coalition – You Can Too!

At their board meeting on January 30, our state League voted to help renew the extremely successful Forever Wild funding at its current level by joining the [Protect Forever Wild Coalition](#). In financial hard times money is tight and some may wish to divert these designated public offshore oil and gas funds for other projects.

[Forever Wild](#) buys or manages environmentally-important land to protect it for public use forever, and merits and needs our support. In the greater Birmingham area, the Cahaba River and Mulberry Fork Wildlife Management Areas have benefitted as has the creation of the Turkey Creek Nature Preserve and Recreation Area. Check out the [Coalition website](#) and see how you can sign up to stay informed and help renew funding for this valuable program.

POINT OF CLARIFICATION

To all who attended the transit meeting at Alabama Power on the 26th, we were told that all the money was coming from the Appalachian Regional Commission. However, that is not true, there is a 20% match required of the state. A clarification from Renee Carter sent when I asked her about Alabama money in this:

The state match for the NBL is 20%, just as it is for any road project or, for that matter, transit project. Like the ARC funding, state highway dollars cannot be flipped to other purposes. However, the increased tax base resulting from economic development along the NBL should provide huge resources from which to obtain matching transit dollars.

Alabama Women’s Hall of Fame

Mary Louise Ivy Burks, a past member of the League of Women Voters will be inducted into the Alabama Women’s Hall of Fame on Thursday March 4 at 10:30 a.m. in the Alumnae Auditorium at Judson College. The ceremony is open to the public. Additionally Margaret Charles Smith, an early mid-wife who saved many women and children in early Alabama will also be inducted.

Mary Burks worked with the League on air quality and later became instrumental in land preservation with her crowning contribution being the designation of a special piece of north Alabama as the Sipsey Wilderness, with all the protection the federal government supports. When Congress did not believe anything in the Eastern United States was sufficiently pristine, Mary lead with others the effort to establish the Eastern Wilderness Act and the beginning of special protected areas in the East. The Sipsey Wilderness in Alabama was one of those places. It is a museum of Canadian vegetation brought to the area by the glacial forces and then left in canyons protected as the glaciers receded. Mary went on to play a role in other protected areas as well as mentoring the next two generations of activists for eco-system preservation, recycling, highway wildflowers, clean waters and energy conservation. For further information you may call Judson College 1.334.683.5109 or visit www.judson.edu/ and click on the Alabama Women’s Hall of Fame on the right margin.

LWVGB Calendar

Month	Day	Time	Event
February	25	6:00pm	Monthly Membership Meeting, Homewood Library
March	2	11:30am	Board Meeting, Community Foundation Building
March	24	11:30am	Monthly Membership Meeting, Alabama Power Electra Room

LWVUS Selects Global Climate Change As 2010 Legislative Priority

The LWVUS Climate Change Task Force will host a caucus at the National Convention in Atlanta in July to present the new Climate Change Toolkit and discuss ways to use and refine it. Joyce Lanning, LWVGB and LWVAL Natural Resources Chair, is a member of that Task Force.

Also, the LWVUS sent a letter to the House of Representatives urging members to oppose legislation from Representatives Moran and Pomeroy which would overturn the EPA's scientific finding that global warming pollutants endanger public health and welfare.

QUOTABLE QUOTES

Our concept of governing is derived from our view of people. It is a concept deeply rooted in a set of beliefs firmly etched in the national conscience, of all of us.

~ **Barbara Jordan**

Man can never be a woman's equal in the spirit of selfless service with which nature has endowed her.

~ **Mohandas Gandhi**

Governing a great nation is like cooking a small fish - too much handling will spoil it.

~ **Lao Tzu**

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