



# The Brown County Voter

February 20, 2014

## Calendar

- Monday, March 10      10:00 Board meeting  
Downstairs at the library  
Everyone welcome!
- Tuesday, April 8 and      7:00 Primary Candidate Forums  
Thursday, April 10      Billy Salmon Room (tentatively)  
Courthouse Annex

## League Hosts Local Legislators

*by Judith East*

Senator Brent Steele and Rep. Eric Koch visited Brown County on Feb. 8 to update local constituents on their current projects in the state legislature, hear concerns and answer questions. The Salmon Room of the Courthouse Annex was packed.

“In all my years of Third House visits, this is the largest turnout I have ever seen,” said Steele.

After opening remarks, League president Julie Winn cautioned the audience to let Brown

County residents speak. Despite a supposed large turnout of people interested in the DNR forest plans, some probably from out of county, there was great diversity in the issues raised, as here follow. Those marked with \* received several comments and/or a round of applause:

\* Expand Medicaid to more Hoosiers, using federal dollars and helping over 400,000 people.

\* Require motorcycles to have yearly muffler inspections and display stickers showing they have done so.

*Continued page 2*



**State Rep. Eric Koch, left, and State Senator Brent Steele meet the Brown County public at a League forum on Feb. 8.**

*Photo by Judith East*

*Continued from page 1:*

\* Block DNR attempts to allow logging in wilderness areas. (Here, Sen. Steele recommended letters, especially hand-written, to Carlin Yoder, Chair of the Natural Resources Committee, Statehouse, 200 Washington St., Indianapolis, IN 46204).

\* Let Hoosiers decide for themselves how they define "marriage."

Follow the Portugal model for dealing with drug crimes (more alternative sentencing, etc. to reduce prison populations).

Abolish the 17th amendment (allowing for 2 senators from each state).

Allow hemp as a third commercial crop for farmers in Indiana.

Fix, legislatively, the errors made by our local elected officials which cost taxpayers money.

Abandon the federal "common core" approach to education, and set Indiana standards.

Support charter schools.

Participate in the Convention of States.

Prevent alcohol theft by keeping liquor in protected areas of stores, like cigarettes.

Stop the billion-dollar tax cut to to big business proposed by Governor Pence. It will cause a 7.3% increase in property taxes and a rise in state income tax, with advantages only to big business but no new businesses locating to Indiana.

Support animal welfare bills: oppose captive hunting; support spay/neuter assistance programs for low income people; thanks for making it a felony to attend dog fights.

## **Program for 2014**

Major issues the league plans to undertake this year are:

- Candidates Forums (April and October)
- Brown County Fiscal Viability Study
- National Agriculture Study
- Revisit and update Emergency Services

position

Your help is very welcome on any or all of these which might interest you. Please contact Julie Winn at [jmbwinn@hotmail.com](mailto:jmbwinn@hotmail.com).

## **Welcome New Members**

Our local Brown County league welcomes eight new members this month! This gives us almost a 33% increase for the year so far. Credit must go to membership chair Pam Raider!

Shari Frank

Mark Bowman

Robyn Rosenberg Bowman

Cathy Rountree

George Turner

Jenni Voris

Larry Voris

Carol Weir

Remember, everyone is welcome at our board meetings, which meet each second Monday morning of the month, 10 am downstairs at the library. With so much on our agenda for the year, meetings are a great way to find out about local issues, and we could use some help!

## **We the People Contribution**

At the February board meeting, members voted to donate \$500 to Brown County Junior High's "We the People" team. It is to help them travel to Washington, D.C., to compete for the national championship in civics. The team is already tops in Indiana, and last year's team won the national championship.

The League's donation will be matched two for one by a Howard Hughes grant.

We are very proud of our Brown County youth and the schools that teach them. What better use can our League find for its membership fees?

## **BCCF Scholarship Fund**

Every year, to honor the memory of League of Women Voters of Brown County founding member Dorothy Stewart, we fund a scholarship for a Brown County graduating senior with an interest in government. With contributions from our membership and the community, money invested for this purpose by the Brown County Community Foundation, and additional funds from our treasury, we are able to donate \$500 this year for one student. The award will be made near the end of the school year.

## Presidents Day 2014

*by Pam Raider*

Every year the State League hosts a workshop on the Saturday prior to President's Day. This is a good time for local league presidents to get together, share ideas, hear about other programs and listen to speakers on topics affecting our state. This year was no different.

We met at the carriage house at the old Propylaeum, which has quite a history including being the original site of the Children's Museum. It was a little crowded but nice to see so many attendees on such a snowy day.

Our first speaker was Purdue Professor Larry DeBoer who some may remember we hosted to speak to our community on the effect of the property tax amendment cap. This time he spoke about Governor Pence's proposal to do away with business property taxes. Compared to surrounding states in the region, Indiana has the highest business property taxes (land and equipment). Under the governor's proposal, communities will have to make up the shortfall in funds and many will raise property taxes. Communities who have reached their cap on property taxes will have no easy way to recoup, simply losing the revenue, and since most farm lands have not reached their caps – they will pay a heavier price. And again schools will most likely take a heavy hit. After a legislative study highlighted these problems, the two bills under consideration do not reflect the governor's plan, instead proposing more modest ideas. In any event, Brown County residents can rest assured – like the personal property caps, we will hardly be touched - our loss of revenue appears to be around \$234 (we were in the bottom of his graph).

After lunch we heard from Jessie Kharbunda, Director of Hoosier Environmental Council. This was a stunning eye-opener on the environmental hazards surrounding Confined Animal Feeding Operations (CaFOs) and the disastrous environmental effects which follow. HEC has signaled out these animal husbandry practices and relevant legislation as the number one source of water pollution in the state. I had no idea that 80% of life stock production in the state is factory farms or that Indiana ranks 5th in the

nation for the most factory farms. Besides the animal cruelty issues, they contribute to water and air pollution. Proposed bills would have made redress by citizens impossible, criminalizing reporters of injustices and would dismantle local regulations. Although more specific bills were defeated, an umbrella law ties the hands of government to protect the public since it now makes legal bad practices under the verbage "generally accepted practices of agriculture."

Jesse also told the group about the greatest inland environmental disaster to date: the Tennessee Coal Ash Sludge flood. Turns out Indiana has some of the biggest coal ash sludge "ponds" in the country, eight to ten of which are considered hazardous. In the discussion ensuing we also learned there over 9,000 above ground chemical storage tanks in the state, most of which are not regularly inspected (leaking above ground storage tanks is what poisoned the water in West Virginia). God help us if storms intensify. Good thing the State League now has a Natural Resources committee. For more information see [www.act.hec-web.org](http://www.act.hec-web.org) and see the request from Kim --- on page 2.

We heard from Donya Lester, farm wife, league member from Montgomery County and Perdue employee about the Ag Study local leagues are asked to study for a National Position. She was very helpful, not only giving us a farmer's viewpoint, but narrowing down the field of questions and helping us think about some of the phrased language. There were different points of view on GMOs and antibiotics for animals in the room. See the outcome of our local league's study choice, pages 4-5.

We heard from Paulette Vandegriff, past state legislator lobbyist for the League, on tips for hosting successful debates. Since our candidates events are mostly forums, this is not yet directly applicable, but many leagues around the state do hold specific debates in their area.

And lastly, Barb Schilling and Mary Jo Gorman weighed in on the value of attracting interns to local leagues. It brings young people into the fold and utilizes their skills.

After a brief tour of the State League Office we headed home filled with new ideas and enthusiasms.

# Environmental Issues Need Your Attention

*by Susanne Gaudin*

Jesse Kharbanda, director at Hoosier Environmental Council, was one of our speakers at Presidents Day. The LWVIN has signed on as a partner with HEC along with 15 other environmental organizations in opposition to Senate Bill 186 and House Bill 1143.

I just used HEC's direct mail Action Center to contact my representatives on SB186. It's an extremely easy and effective way to let them know you oppose this legislation. I added my personal comments to their prepared letter and it's now been sent to my representatives.

Hi Susanne,

Jesse tells me the event was a great success and that the League is on board with helping us to oppose SB 186 and HB 1143. With respect to SB 186, our window of opportunity is narrow. At this point, we are focusing on trying to get the Bill recommitted to the House Judiciary Committee so that lawyers on that committee will actually take time to consider the legal implications of passing such a dangerous law. To that end, it would be extremely helpful if League members

could do the following:

1. Call or email their own House Representatives to voice their opposition to SB 186 and ask their Rep to urge Speaker Brian Bosma to recommit SB 186 to the Judiciary Committee. This can be done in one of two ways: a) direct email through our Action Center at <http://act.hecweb.org/13695/stop-legal-exemptions-big-agri-business/> or b) email and/or phone through the General Assembly website at <http://iga.in.gov/legislative/2014/legislators/>.

2. Call or email Speaker of the House Brian Bosma and urge him to recommit SB 186 to House Judiciary. Speaker Bosma is best reached through his Chief of Staff, Lesley Crane by phone at 317/ 232-9640 or email at [lcrane@iga.in.gov](mailto:lcrane@iga.in.gov).

Talking points and sample letters can be found on our Bill Watch 2014 page here: <http://www.hecweb.org/billwatch2014/agriculture/big-favors-for-big-ag/>

Warm regards,

Kim Ferraro, Staff Attorney

Director of Water Policy

Hoosier Environmental Council

## Tulip Trace Campground Stakeholders Meeting

*by Pam Raider*

I learned of the Tulip Trace Camp Stakeholders meeting held on Thursday, February 13, at our local library and since that is my neck of the woods I decided to attend. The Tulip Trace Camp, otherwise known as the Girl Scout Camp, situated next to T.C. Steele, had previously been bought by the Nature Conservancy which served as a placeholder until DNR could get the money to buy it from them. This property actually includes 282 acres and the buildings of the old camp – six cabins and the “bridge house” which has a kitchen, restrooms and large meeting room.

A graduate seminar course under Assistant Professor James Farmer of the Department of Park and Tourism Studies, School of Public Education (maybe they would take a 2020 project) had done some preliminary work and was soliciting ideas from the general public. There was a very poor showing of the public – mostly stakeholders – Mark Shields of our Parks and Rec Dept, Andrea de Tarnowsky of T.C. Steele, a neighbor, several people from Hoosier Hiking Council, myself and two other interested people.

The PowerPoint presentation listed ideas they had thought up for sustainable use of the facilities. They included: Environmental education center, therapeutic retreat center, primitive camping, mountain biking, hiking and disc golf. There was concern from the audience that since the property is now under Yellowwood management, it would be subject to the same logging schedules and yes, Jim Allen stated it would. Some contention was raised around the issue of having an environmental camp in the middle of a logged forest. However, if profitable enough, maybe it would be saved from direct logging. I added to their list a few ideas of my own – Audubon bird viewing trips, Outward Bound, partnering with Purdue Extension to have master gardening courses and kitchen courses on preserves, canning, bread making, a community kitchen, solar workshop building, cross country skiing, a permaculture lab with planted berries and fruit trees.

Anyone with ideas can send them to [jafarmer@indiana.edu](mailto:jafarmer@indiana.edu). The final presentation from the students will be on May 1 from 3 – 4:30 pm. This could be a wonderful adjunct space to our nature leg of the 2020 Vision project.

## Observer Reports, February 2014

*by Pam Raider*

What a winter – so many days not able to drive out – ice, snow cold temperatures just too cold. Hey, its winter, who doesn't want to hibernate a bit?

This seemed a perfect time to stay home and try out the new county video equipment. The first time I logged on to the site, I was able to view a tiny screen of video. The next time there was only an audio feed. Here is the website: [www.browncounty-in.gov](http://www.browncounty-in.gov). That got me to the home page and then I chose archives. There is a list of the recent archived meetings to choose from. I still have not found out what happened to the video feed. Also for the multi-taskers among us, I was able to listen and minimize and continue answering email.

Of course hearing the meeting and being there in person is not quite the same experience – but how wonderful to have the ability to listen to county meetings and have an audio archive of what was said.

The first Commissioners meetings of both months were cancelled and the County Council meeting was moved. So glad I didn't brave the elements to try to keep up with them.

We need to begin thinking about our fiscal government study – I think we would have many allies. If you have any questions about some of the fiscal issues at stake, listen to the County Council's meeting of January 21, 2014. What started out as perfunctory appointments and moving of monies soon became a pretty heated argument with accusations flying mostly from Larry Ness and Evan Werling, who have been heading the County Redevelopment Commission, over the ineptness of public officials, and the problem of

too many jobs, committees, boards with not enough volunteers. It seemed to have resolved itself at the end of the meeting. I have since heard that those two individuals have been replaced on the RDC. The proposed filling of the GIS co-ordinator slot which John Kennard proposed combining with another position has also become a contentious subject.

The observer corps may well have other meetings to cover besides governmental. On February 19 I attended an informational session on GMOs put on by our neighbors the Monroe County LWV. Hopefully they will continue to invite us to some of their sessions because we can learn from their expertise as well. They had three speakers: George Hegeman, retired Professor of Microbiology at IU, Kyle Cline of Indiana Farm Bureau and Dr. Marti Crouch, agriculture consultant. Very informative about latest findings on GMOs.

On that same evening Julie Winn and I attended the presentation to the Town of Nashville of the MKSK consulting firm study about how to better market ourselves as a tourist town. Bob Kirlin, President of the Town Board, spoke first and we learned that Nashville has applied to the state for recognition as a Stellar Community. If approved it paves the way for easier grant money, and just being a finalist is a \$10,000 grant – so stay tuned on that score. Most of the presentation was about better displaying our town identity at entry points, making parking more readily marked and improving the flow of traffic into town. I did not stay for the discussion but I am sure we will be hearing more about the decisions made as result of this meeting.

## Dorothy Stewart Scholarship

Please think about a donation to the "Dorothy Stewart Scholarship" with the Brown County Community Foundation. Dorothy was one of our League founding members and its first president. She was killed by a pack of dogs while working on the 2000 Census. The scholarship will go to a Brown County graduating senior who is interested in a political or environmental field of study. Your tax-exempt donation provides scholarships to Brown County students interested in civics.

The Foundation is located at 91 W. Mound St. Unit 4 and the address is P.O. Box 191, Nashville 47448. This is the building at the corner of Mound and Jefferson Sts.

Support your local league with a tax deductible contribution to our education fund with a check made out to lwvin-ed. Send to PO Box 74, Nashville, IN 47448. Or, you can contribute directly to the Foundation, either to the Fund (i.e. endowment) or directly to this year's grant.

# Agriculture Update Consensus Questions

The National League has asked every local league to prioritize agricultural issues by this April. It provided backup information for study so that leagues can make informed choices. However, given the short timeframe and the quantity of information, the League of Women Voters of Brown County decided to choose just one issue to study. The membership was given the opportunity to vote on which one. By the deadline Monday evening, Feb. 17, the votes came in as indicated in the righthand column. **As there was a tie between items 7 and 9, members are asked to vote again between those two by Sunday evening, Feb. 23.** Please email your vote to Susanne Gaudin at [asgaudin@msn.com](mailto:asgaudin@msn.com) or Julie Winn at [jmbwinn@hotmail.com](mailto:jmbwinn@hotmail.com).

**Number  
of Votes**

## **Economic Health of the Agricultural Sector**

1

1. Should government financial support for agriculture be directed to:

- a) Subsidized agricultural credit (loans)
- c) Disaster assistance
- d) Crop insurance
- e) Farms that supply local and regional markets
- f) Subsidized implementation of best management practices
- g) Commodity crop programs, e.g. , corn, soybeans, sugar, cotton, wheat
- h) Commodity livestock program
- i) Commodity dairy program
- j) Specialty crops, e.g. fruits, vegetables, nuts, etc.
- k) Other production methods, e.g. organic, hydroponic, urban, etc. farms

2. What changes should government make regarding direct payment programs to farm operators?

1

Note: Farm operators can be anything between family farms to huge corporations.

- a) Eliminate direct payments to farm operators
- b) Update the rules for direct payments to farm operators to support sustainability
- c) Broaden the types of farms that are eligible
- d) Broaden the types of crops that are eligible
- e) Effectively enforce existing rules

3. What changes to current crop insurance program should government make?

0

- a) Extend to more types of crops
- b) Link to the use of conservation practices
- c) Limit insurance for the cultivation of marginal and environmentally sensitive land
- d) Cap amount of premium subsidy to a single farm operator (see note in question 2)

4. Should government act on any of the following?

0

- a) Revise anti-trust legislation to ensure competitive agricultural markets
- b) Enforce anti-trust laws as they relate to agriculture
- c) Promote alternative marketing systems, including regional hub markets, farmer cooperatives, farm markets, etc.

## **Animal Management**

5. Which of the following approaches to animal management should government achieve?

3

- a) Transparently collect and disclose data about regulated animal feeding operations (AFOs) or aquaculture operations and about the health of animals in such regulated operations
- b) Apply and enforce existing clean air and clean water regulations to animal or seafood management facilities

6. Which of the following approaches to animal waste management should government require or bring about? 0
- a) Treat animal waste with environmentally sound technologies for all regulated AFOs
  - b) Prioritize federal funds to mitigate existing environmental challenges (such as Environmental Quality Incentives Program, cost share, loans, etc .) rather than construction of new facilities

### **Research and Development**

7. Which of the following approaches to research and development (R&D) should government fund or accomplish? 4

Note: For the purpose of these questions and some questions below, “developed using any new technology” or “new technologies” refer to any of many scientific processes for developing new crops or animals with genetic engineering, nanotechnology or other new techniques, which are not the traditional breeding or hybridization techniques.

- a) Basic research
- b) Independent third-party (such as an academic institution) risk assessment of products developed using any new technology
- c) Research to assess the impacts of new technologies on human health and the environment, prior to their widespread adoption
- d) Research that advances the continuation of diversified and sustainable agricultural systems
- e) Seed banking, research, and other means that promote and preserve genetic diversity
- f) Both transparency in the reporting of research studies related to approval of new products and respect for intellectual property rights of private enterprises engaged in research
- g) Research on long-term effects of new crops, products and processes
- h) Development of new practices and technologies to promote conservation for all types of farms

### **Food Safety**

8. Which of the following approaches to food safety should government perform or fund? 2

- a) Clarify and enforce pre-market testing requirements for new foods and food additives developed using any new technology (see note below question 7)
- b) Require developers to monitor all food products developed using any new technology after releasing to the market
- c) Withdraw marketing approval if products are shown to be unsafe
- d) Require post-market monitoring of approved pharmaceutical applications in animal production for human health and environmental impacts
- e) Require developers of new products to provide data and other materials to independent third-parties (such as academic institutions) for pre- and post-market safety assessment as appropriate
- f) Limit use of antibiotics in animal production to treat and control disease
- g) Fund independent third-party (such as academic institutions) risk assessment of long-term and multiple exposures from foods on human health and the environment
- h) Promote crop management practices that decrease dependency on added chemicals (pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers)
- i) Fund, train and add personnel for assessment and compliance functions of regulatory agencies

### **Food Labeling**

9. How sufficient are the following regarding current food labeling? 4

- a) Nutrition Facts on food labels
- b) Nutrition Facts on food labels as a means of consumer education
- c) Common allergen labeling
- d) Health and ingredient claims that consumers can understand

10. Which of the following should government achieve regarding marketing and ingredient claims on food labels? 0

- a) Define (and approve for use) health and safety marketing terms (e.g. immunity support, humane, pasture-raised, natural, etc.)
- b) Regulate the use of images or other sensory advertising
- c) Require that ingredient marketing claims accurately represent what is in the required ingredient list

11. Recognizing that each food developed using any new technology can be unique, and assuming that required food labeling should be useful to consumers, should the following generalized information relating to how products or components are developed be presented on food? See note below question 7. 0

All these questions also assume some percentage threshold of new technology ingredients, such as the 0.9% used in the European Union.

- a) Contains ingredients developed using any new technology stating which technologies are involved
- b) Does not contain ingredients developed using any new technology
- c) If meat, fish, eggs, or dairy products are from animals that have consumed feed developed using any new technology, stating which technologies are involved

LWVBC  
PO Box 74  
Nashville, IN 47448

