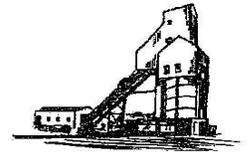




# Copper Country Voter

Published by the  
Copper Country League of Women Voters  
Houghton County, Michigan



## LWVCC Calendar

- Feb. 3** Board Meeting  
Tuesday, 7:00PM Country Inn & Suites, Houghton
- Mar. 3** Board Meeting  
Tuesday, 7:00PM Country Inn & Suites, Houghton
- Mar. 24** Youth Leadership Program  
Tuesday, 6:30PM CCISD Board Room
- Apr. 7** Board Meeting  
Tuesday, 7:00PM Country Inn & Suites, Houghton
- Apr. 11** Annual Meeting  
Saturday, 11:15AM Speaker: Rep. Scott Dianda, MI 110<sup>th</sup> District  
Ramada Waterfront Meeting Room, Hancock
- May 15-17** LWVMI State Convention  
"Giving Voice to Democracy"  
Four Points Hotel, Kalamazoo, MI

## LWVCC Board for 2014 - 2015

- Shared Governance Model**
- Acting President/**  
**Mary Jane Hatton** 523-5368
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/**  
**Children and Youth**  
**Carol Kreher** 487-6778
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President/**  
**Natural Resources**  
**Kristine Bradof** 482-0446
- Treasurer**  
**Mary Marchaterre** 483-2291
- Secretary**  
**Barry Fink** 482-4632
- Director**  
**Ellen Varney** 524-7845
- Electoral Process**  
**Faith Morrison** 487-9703
- Voter Service**  
**Kathy Flagstadt** 399-0721
- Off Board**
- Education**  
**Martha Sloan** 369-4184
- International Relations**  
**Carol Kurz** 337-2920
- Facebook**  
**Lisa Dunnebacke** 231-2176
- Voter Editor**  
**Linda Ott** 487-2315
- Website Editor**  
**Shellie Crisman** 523-6299

## **Know Your Government Officials Pamphlets**

The 2015 LWV Know your Government Officials pamphlets are now available for Houghton County. New this year, we will have a Baraga county Know your Government Officials pamphlet and that will be ready by the end of the month. If you would like either to distribute, please let Kathy Flagstadt know 399-0721 or email at: [kflagstadt@hotmail.com](mailto:kflagstadt@hotmail.com).

## **Update on the matter of the UP Energy Crisis**

The Governor's office announced in January, 2015, that a proposed agreement is in place between the power companies and the mining company which will bring relief to the rate payers of the Upper Peninsula. The mining company will kill its "choice contract" with a WI energy provider. They will continue to receive power through an existing coal plant, now scheduled to retire when a new gas plant is built by a MI provider. This will keep Michigan energy decisions in Michigan, and end the FERC's role in rate and reliability decisions.

[www.lwvccmi.org](http://www.lwvccmi.org)  
<http://www.facebook.com/coppercountrylwv>

## **Low Income Workers in Baraga, Houghton and Keweenaw Counties Need Public Transit**

A study is being proposed for a new LWVCC position on public transit in Baraga, Houghton and Keweenaw counties. Member Susan Beck compiled this background information for our consideration. This proposal will require a vote of the membership at the annual meeting April 11th. If you are interested in working on this study in regard to transit and low income workers, please contact Kristine Bradof at [kbradof@mtu.edu](mailto:kbradof@mtu.edu).

Governor Rick Snyder recognizes the need for public transportation for senior citizens, veterans, and people with disabilities, but here, in the UP, low income workers should be added to that list. Workers in Houghton, Baraga, and Keweenaw counties would benefit from a regional public transit system. Such a system would also serve the general public. Agencies (Western Upper Peninsula Planning and Development Region, Michigan Works, and the Regional Interagency Consumer Committee <RICC>) in the region have been working together and separately to study the situation. They also stay in communication and have been meeting with state and local officials according to Terry Sayatovich, coordinator of the RICC.

A 2011 study from WUPPDR offers a five-year progression of possible regional designs that might replace the current isolated city and county systems. Jerry Wuorenmaa, a Planner at WUPPDR and author of the study, comments that Governor Snyder has a deep interest in regional planning. It is hoped that the Governor's interest will extend to the U.P. worker, because the transit systems in place now in Houghton and Hancock, for example, are not coordinated; nor do they travel to places like the Range towns or Calumet on a regular, daily basis. This affects thousands of people who want to work in the region.

A low income worker cannot travel to work easily without a car. Costs to support a car may be out of reach for someone who makes \$9.50 an hour or for a waitress or waiter who makes \$2.30 an hour in base pay. Tips are not a constant—especially in today's economy.

A taxi ride costs at least \$10 per person from the Range towns to Hancock (around seven miles one way), no matter how many people are in the taxi. If the worker earns \$9.50 per hour minus taxes, the cost of that one way trip creates negative income. For example, a home care worker may be scheduled for only two hours of work. After round trip

transportation and taxes, the poverty level is more than met.

Those of us who grew up in cities think nothing of taking a bus or a train. It is a normal way of life for nearly all economic classes. The National Association for State Community Services Program's The Stranded Poor: Recognizing the Importance of Public Transportation for Low Income Households, published in 2008, reports that well-designed public transportation is a healthy support for community structures:

<[http://www.nascsp.org/data/files/csb\\_g\\_publications/issue\\_briefs/issuebrief-benefitsofruralpublictransportation.pdf](http://www.nascsp.org/data/files/csb_g_publications/issue_briefs/issuebrief-benefitsofruralpublictransportation.pdf)> But Cherilynn Lampinen, regional director of Michigan Works, notes that some low income workers think that the need to use public transit is demeaning; many, however, disagree.

In fact, in the WUPPDR study analysis, comments indicate that people appreciate public transit. The WUPPDR subjects answered online; so, the range of economic classes is varied, but the answers are positive across the board. Perhaps a study limited to low income workers might lead to incentives for regional funding for a transit service geared to that group. Certainly, the study should lead to a better understanding of their needs.

In our Upper Peninsula Region, we know that transit needs here present challenges not found in urban areas. What will we do to serve the people who live in truly rural, isolated places? It is a different land here in the U.P., and in facing the challenge of the weather, we feel unity. No matter where we stand economically, we understand the importance of traveling safely in winter when we go to work.

States across the country are addressing consistent public transit for low income workers—without or with disabilities--at the regional level. If you examine Jerry Wuorenmaa's study (<http://www.wupldr.com/pdf/BHKtransitWEB.pdf>), you will see that the five year plan and suggested plans for transit would most likely bring people to work—even from isolated, rural situations. The results of the plans would bring the public in general to shopping which would be good for the economy and for the people. It's heartening that politicians on both sides of the aisle acknowledged the importance of tackling poverty with relentless positive action; to quote Gov. Snyder . . . : “ We urge county and local elected officials to follow suit and come up with strategies in 2015 aimed at reducing child poverty and homelessness.”

## Citizenship Question:

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services provide 100 civics (history and government) questions and answers for the naturalization test. Below is a question that was selected. The answer is further down.

31. If the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?

- a) the President Pro Tempore
  - b) the Secretary of the treasury
  - c) the Speaker of the House
  - d) the Secretary of State
- 

## Governor Snyder vetoes Two Bills

Governor Snyder vetoed two bills on January 15 that would have made it easier for persons subject to personal protection orders in domestic violence cases to obtain a concealed pistol license and eliminated county-level boards for issuing the licenses. He said, "We simply can't and won't take the chance of exposing domestic abuse victims to additional violence or intimidation. There are certainly some reforms that can improve the way Michigan issues concealed pistol licenses and we support the rights of law-abiding firearm owners, but it's crucial that we leave in place protections for people who already have endured challenges and abuse."

---

## Answer to Citizenship Question:

31. c) the Speaker of the House

**Save the date!**

**2015 Annual Meeting  
April 11, 2015 11:15am**

**Speaker: State Rep. Scott Dianda  
MI 110<sup>th</sup> District**

**Luncheon: Purchase on your own from a  
limited menu**

**RSVP: Mary Marchaterre  
[mmmarcha@mtu.edu](mailto:mmmarcha@mtu.edu) or call 483-2291**

## Program Planning Meeting Report

Thirteen members gathered for a lively discussion and review of the positions held by the League of Women Voters of Michigan, in preparation for biennial state convention. The group reached consensus regarding the recommendation to retain most of the positions and to await the state committee recommendations regarding the need to do updates or minor technical revisions in the positions on Taxation and Budgeting and Structure and Function of Michigan Public Libraries.

---

## State of Michigan to Lengthen School Year

Member Martha Sloan became aware of the discrepancy in number of school days in Michigan compared to other states. While most states require 180 days in a school year, Michigan requires only 170. While examining the possible need for a proposed study on this issue to LWVMI, additional information confirmed that Michigan will indeed require 180 days by the 2016 school year.

The 19<sup>th</sup> edition of the Report Card on American Education ranks Michigan 40<sup>th</sup> in the states on educational achievement. All of our neighboring states rank at least ten places higher than Michigan.<sup>1</sup> While we could all quibble on definitions and emphases, certainly increasing the number of school days to the American norm is one strategy for improving the education of Michigan children. Moreover, education is becoming the civil rights issue of our time. If we want well-educated voters, we need to offer them more education. Therefore we applaud this move to lengthen the K-12 school year in Michigan.

---

<sup>1</sup> American Legislative Exchange Council, Report on American Education: State Education Rankings, <http://www.alec.org/publications/report-card-on-american-education/>

---

## Discover Cuba with the League

The League of Women Voters of Florida Ed Fund has announced that they will again sponsor delegations to Cuba. Trips are planned for April, May, September, October and November. If you are interested in these trips, contact [lwfevents@gmail.com](mailto:lwfevents@gmail.com). More information is available at <http://thefloridavoter.org/trips-events-listing/cuba/>



The League of Women Voters  
of the Copper Country  
PO Box 815  
Houghton, MI 49931

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

**Join or make a donation to the League of Women Voters of the Copper Country!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work)

Check here if you would like to receive your LWVCC  
Voter by e-mail.

Contributions to the annual finance drive and Kay LaRue Scholarship  
are NOT tax deductible. Checks should be made out to: LWVCC.

Contributions to the Educational Fund are tax deductible.  
Checks should be made out to: LWV Educational Fund

**Membership**

Individual Dues (\$55)

Household Dues (\$80)

Student Dues (\$30)

**Donation**

Finance Drive (\$\_\_\_\_)

Kay LaRue Scholarship (\$\_\_\_\_)

Education Fund {\$\_\_\_\_)