

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS ® OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO
6739 Academy Rd. NE Suite 124, Albuquerque, NM 87109 lwvcnm.org (505) 884-8441

President's Report
by Starlyn Brown

The November 3 Midterm General Election marks the end of an incredible effort by so many LWVCNM members. Throughout October, our members were busy educating current and future voters and helping ensure that voters had the information they needed. Now it's time to take a breath, recharge, and get ready to do it all again! Elections happen every year, and next year we'll turn our attention to municipal and local elections.

November Educational Meeting: Data Centers and Microgrids Study

Last month, I mentioned the LWVCNM study on data centers and microgrids. Our November educational meeting will focus on this topic and continue the learning process for our members. Please plan to join us in person or on Zoom. If you can't attend, I encourage you to watch the recording, which will be posted after the meeting.

SAVE THE DATE! Holiday Party

Sunday, December 6, 2–4 p.m.

This is one of my favorite LWVCNM events! It's a chance to relax, enjoy good conversation, and celebrate all that we've accomplished together this year. I hope you'll join us.

What's Next? The 2027 Legislative Session

The next New Mexico legislative session begins in January. The 2027 session will be a 60-day session, and with every seat in the New Mexico House of Representatives on the midterm election ballot, we may see some new faces at the Roundhouse.

The state League has been active throughout the year, attending interim legislative committee meetings and following discussions that offer clues about legislators' priorities and bills that may be introduced. Bill prefiling begins in December, so the work is already getting underway.

All League advocacy at the Legislature is coordinated by the state League, of which every LWVCNM member is also a member. If you're interested in becoming a League advocate or simply learning

more about the legislative process and our advocacy work, please send me an email. There are many ways to get involved! president@lwvcnm.org

---

NOVEMBER EDUCATIONAL MEETING

Thursday, November 12TH at Noon



WHERE: LWVCNM Offices Conference Room, 6739 Academy Rd. NE, ample parking available. In person (members and guests only); Zoom (members and general public)

TOPIC: HYPERSCALE DATA CENTERS IN NEW MEXICO

SPEAKERS: THE DATA CENTER & MICROGRID STUDY COMMITTEE OF THE LWVCNM

This will be a hybrid meeting at 12 PM with in-person attendance in the LWVCNM conference room.

The Data Center and Microgrid Study Committee will present information about its ongoing study for this general meeting of the League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico. The nine-member study committee has spent the last six months learning about data centers in New Mexico, their impact on the environment, the kinds of jobs they bring to the state, and the current state of the electric grid.

There are more data centers in Albuquerque than any other area of the state. Of the four counties the Central New Mexico League covers, only Bernalillo and Valencia have operating data centers. The cluster of data centers in Albuquerque is mostly in the downtown area and are small scale; the largest draws about six megawatts. The Public Service Company of New Mexico's electric grid has been able to absorb their power needs, and they have all received air quality permits for back-up generators and are connected to the Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Authority.

Hyperscale data centers are different. Meta's data center in Los Lunas began on a small scale and has over the past 10 years grown into a hyperscale data center. It has had a complex growth pattern, requiring that PNM design and build a separate electric substation, paid for by Meta. Meta's growth was slow and manageable, but we are seeing a new wave of development in which an enormous project is announced and local communities are forced to react. Here's what is happening all around us.

Hyperscale data centers are bringing enormous change to New Mexico. They are defined by the Congressional Research Service as having more than 5,000 servers in buildings of more than 10,000 square feet, and drawing more than 100 megawatts of electricity.

Project Jupiter, a hyperscale artificial intelligence learning data center near Santa Teresa, is being built for Oracle and Chat GBT. It plans to build a fuel-cell microgrid capable of generating nearly as much power as the Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM), the largest investor-owned electric utility in the state, generates.

Google has announced that it is exploring the possibility of building a 7-gigawatt hyperscale data center capable of generating about 3 times the amount of electricity generated by PNM near Hobbs in Lea County.

What does that actually mean for our air quality, our water use, our economy, our landscape and our pocketbooks? We will have a chance to talk about the changes the data centers are bringing, and some things the state and local governments might do to enhance their positive impacts and mitigate their negative impacts.

An article with background and interim findings by CNM's study group was published in last month's VOTER, and additional information is located below.

Join us with your questions and suggestions for an exploration of this new frontier in our state.

Hyperscale data centers: Quick overview and environmental impact summary

As a further installment of information from the LWVCNM study on data centers and microgrids, this article provides basic information on the range of environmental impacts data centers may have, depending on the facility design choices made by developers. We hope this will assist League members in better understanding how the development of hyperscale data centers could have wildly diverse outcomes, depending on many factors. This article is written for information and discussion and is not meant to be in support of or opposition to any particular data center proposal.

Data centers perform functions that modern life depends on daily in the United States. As the League of Women Voters of Metro St. Louis has noted, data centers are "critical and necessary in our current world" for everything from cell-phone communication, data processing, cloud storage, and banking to national security and defense—while their construction nonetheless "requires information and careful consideration."[1]

Many of the largest data centers (defined as "hyperscale", see below) are now being developed to train and make inferences in response to AI (artificial intelligence) queries. While there is no single industry or legal definition of a "hyperscale" data center, the main concept is that they are very big! The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) uses a definition of hyperscale data centers that aligns with a definition used by the Congressional Research Service. We feel this definition serves as a good benchmark.

A hyperscale data center:

- Has at least 5,000 computer servers
- Occupies at least 10,000 sq ft of physical space
- Requires an electric power rating (power draw) exceeding 100 MW.[2] For context, this level of electric power (100MW) is sufficient to support the electricity needs of about 80,000 U.S. households.

Figure 1 gives a basic schematic of the elements of a data center.

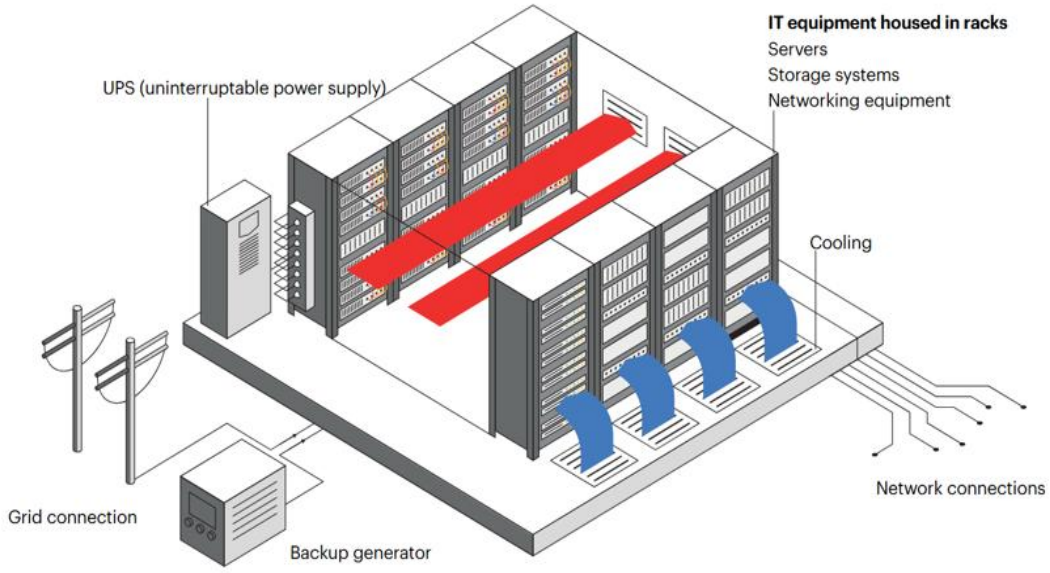


Figure 1. Example of a data center. Figure from the International Energy Association.[1]

Environmental Impacts

Water use

The impact of data centers on water use, air emissions, heat, and noise depends on how the facility is built and what kind of energy source is used to power it. All data centers require cooling to keep the servers and other equipment inside them running. How a facility is cooled has a large impact on both the amount of water required and the amount of power necessary:

- If a data center uses open evaporative cooling, energy consumption would be relatively low but water consumption would be high (consuming about 85% of withdrawn water annually).
- If closed-loop cooling is used, the facility can get by with much less water (about a 70% reduction!) but energy requirements go up.

In places like New Mexico, where water is precious, a closed-loop facility would be much more desirable than open evaporative cooling, from a water perspective.

Air Emissions

The energy source for a data center has a large impact on the amount of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) the facility will produce. Such emissions are sometimes collapsed into "greenhouse gas equivalent carbon dioxide" (CO_2E) for ease of comparison. CO_2E is an expression of the anticipated impact on global warming of different greenhouse gases calculated based on various emission properties.[5] For example, energy derived from coal has about 55% higher CO_2E than natural gas. Natural gas emits about eight times more CO_2E than solar power, and wind and nuclear energy would emit less CO_2E than solar power.

Each energy source comes with other trade-offs in the forms of different required infrastructure: pipelines for natural gas, space and transmission lines needed for solar photovoltaics, or waste streams

[1] IEA (2025), *Energy and AI*, IEA, Paris. https://www.iea.org/reports/energy-and-ai

generated in the case of nuclear power.[6] The graph below presents common types of power and the associated GHG each generates per gigawatt hour of electricity.

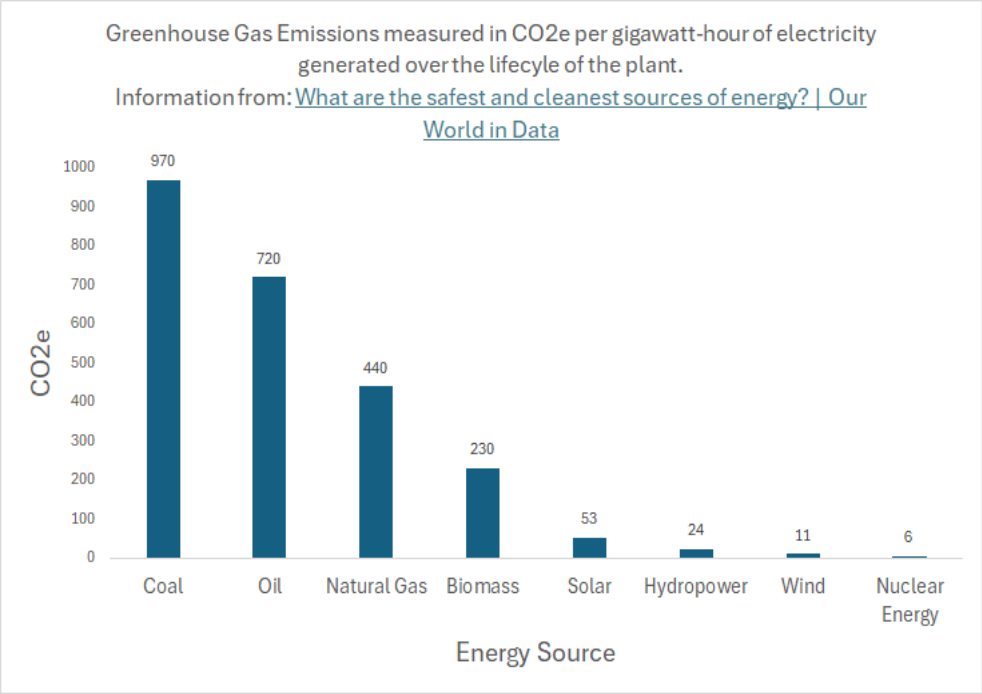


Figure 2: GHG emissions per energy source.

Noise and Heat

In addition to water use and air emissions, data centers also generate noise (from fans, chillers, and back-up generators), and they create heat. There are design features and set-back requirements that could be employed that would mitigate these impacts. If they are installed, however, there are no state-wide requirements on heat or noise generated by industrial facilities at this time, as these are either set at county or municipal levels or do not exist.

We hope this short summation of the range of potential environmental impacts of data centers gives a window into the tradeoffs facing our governments and communities as they face a number of large data center proposals in New Mexico and across the country. Our next monthly article will discuss energy impacts and economic development from data centers. It is clear to us that establishing what is best for communities in these various areas is a difficult and daunting task.

---

1 https://my.lwv.org/missouri/metro-st-louis/article/environmental-quality-and-climate-committee-metro-st-louis-data-centers

2 https://www.env.nm.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/2026-07-13-WNRC-NMED-EPD-Data-Centers-and-Air-Quality-Final.pdf

3 https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48646

4 IEA (2025), Energy and AI, IEA, Paris. https://www.iea.org/reports/energy-and-ai

5 CO_2E is the unit of measurement for the impact of different greenhouse gases (GHGs) on global warming, expressed in terms of the amount of CO_2 calculated on the basis of the Global Warming Potential index. (https://zeroco2.eco/en/magazine/environment/co2-equivalent/)

6 See https://ourworldindata.org/safest-sources-of-energy for further comparison of CO_2E and safety data for various energy sources.

Share an evening post-election with League members while you:

Breathe a sigh of relief that our hard work is over.
Breathe a sigh of relief that the spam emails and texts have stopped.
Share your happiness that your candidates/issues won.
Share your sadness that your candidates/issues lost.

We will gather on Tuesday, November 10th
from 4 to 6 pm
at Hops Brewery on 4th Street in Los Ranchos

Voter Guide Committee Report

The LWVCNM Voter Guides for the November 3rd General Election for Bernalillo/Sandoval and Torrance/Valencia Counties were posted on our website at the end of September. Print versions of the guide were distributed by more than 25 intrepid volunteers to businesses, community and senior centers, libraries, school campuses and organizations throughout the four-county area.

We had guides available for the public at many tabling events in October – they were very well received.

We will prepare a summary report following the completion of the general election, but it is likely that at least one race will be decided in a run-off election in December.

We will wrap up for the season with a home-baked cookie distribution to our county clerk's offices.

We would like to thank all the members who helped with this project – tasks both large and small! We couldn't do this without you.



Jen, Jill, & Linda at Bosque Farmer's Market

- Lani Desaulniers, Karen Wentworth, and the Voter Guide Committee

NOTE DATE and TIME CHANGE

The LWVCNM Book Club

New members are always welcome!

The LWVCNM Book Club usually meets the 4th Wednesday of each odd-numbered month at 5:30pm. (Except November, which meets the 3rd Wednesday.)

If you are not able to complete a book before the session, come anyway and join the conversation. Enjoy light snacks and the opportunity to get to know other LWVCNM members.

Next Gathering: NOTE DIFFERENT DATE, TIME, & LOCATION!!!

Date: Sunday, November 22nd

Time: 3:00 pm

Location: Park Plaza, 1331 Park Ave SW.

Title: The Wage Standard: What's Wrong in the Labor Market and How to Fix It, by Arindrajit Dube

Author Arindrajit Dube is Provost Professor of Economics at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst where his research focuses on labor economics. Janet Yellen, former Secretary of Treasury and former Chair of the Federal Reserve, describes The Wage Standard as a "deeply insightful analysis of how America's labor market went off course – why rising productivity has not translated into rising wages for most Americans."

Upcoming titles: For **January,** The Changemakers: How New Mexico Became the Land of Women's Equality, by Tasia Young.

Any questions? Contact Janet at 505-401-2052


SAVE THE DATE !!
Join us for a
LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO
HOLIDAY
Party
DECEMBER 6th FROM 2-4PM
AT THE HOME OF BETSY CARLSON
Address provided upon RSVP to Dina Hennessy: dinahennessy@gmail.com or 505-453-9725

LWVCNM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:
Starlyn Brown

1st Co-Vice Presidents/Voter Guide:
Karen Wentworth & Lani Desaulniers

2nd Vice President/Membership:
Dina Hennessy

3rd Vice President/Program:
Karen Douglas

4th Vice President/Development:
Betsy Carlson

Treasurer: **Janet Kirkpatrick**

Secretary: **Joni Ullery**

Director/Voter Services Chair: **Jill Crawley**

Director/Sustainability/Climate Change:
Jeanne Logsdon

Director/Office Manager: **Terry Quinn**

Director/ Special Projects: **Jen Pecasting**

Director/Webmaster/Zoom Host: **Linda Miller**

Director/Civic Education: **Liz Shields**

Director/Outreach: **Kit Rosewater**

Advocacy Team/Observer Corps:
Karen Wentworth

Voter Guide Distribution:
Ellen Kelly

If you need help with Zoom,
please reach out to Zoom host, Linda Miller,
lmiller@unm.edu

Please submit your articles for the monthly Voter by the 15th of each month to Michal Mudd at:
VoterEditorMichal@gmail.com

LWVCNM CALENDAR

Nov. 3rd (Tuesday)

** ELECTION DAY **

Nov. 4th (Wednesday) 5:30 pm

LWVCNM Board Meeting,
ZOOM until further notice.
All members welcome.

November 12th (Thursday) 12 Noon

LWVCNM Monthly Educational Meeting

In person and ZOOM

Topic: Hyperscale Data Centers in New Mexico

Speakers: Report from the LWVCNM Data Center & Microgrid Study Committee

Nov. 10th (Tuesday) 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Post-election Gathering at Hops Brewery

4th Street in Los Ranchos

Nov. 22nd (Sunday) 3:00 pm

Different day, time and location!

LWVCNM Book Club

Book choice: The Wage Standard: What's Wrong in the Labor Market and How to Fix It

See info p. 6

SAVE THE DATE!!

Dec. 6th (Sunday) 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

LWVCNM Holiday Party

Please RSVP to Dina Henessey (dinahennessey@gmail.com) for the address

OBSERVER REPORTS

Observer Corps Report – Bernalillo County Commission

October 14, 2026

Karen Wentworth

Bernalillo County Commission Declares a Fentanyl Crisis in the County

All members of the commission were present.

New Mexico has one of the highest opioid death rates in the United States. Every week about six people die from an overdose. Bernalillo County has the highest fentanyl death rate in the state. The Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) is one of the largest county jails in the nation. The MDC has the capacity to house 1,950 inmates. The county spends about $34 million dollars a year to operate it. That is not enough because the medical and mental health problems of inmates are overwhelming the ability of MDC to handle them. Every day, MDC doctors and nurses try to manage the drug and alcohol detoxification of 150 to 227 individuals. Some of them have complicated medical and mental health conditions. The sheer numbers of inmates who need detoxification treatment have pushed the county into declaring a state of emergency.

For the last few years, the University of New Mexico Hospital and Medical Center have worked to handle health care at MDC, but UNM gave notice to the county several months ago that it could no longer manage the system. County officials have been looking for a new health care provider and will have to make some difficult financial decisions soon.

The first step the county is planning to take is to appropriate about $30 million dollars from financial reserves. That would take Bernalillo County from a reserve fund that could handle eight months of county operations in an emergency down to two months of operating funds. That's a level that would normally trigger a takeover of county finances by the state, so the county is asking permission from the NM Department of Finance and Administration to take this extreme step.

The money would be used to build new health care facilities for the large numbers of inmates who are undergoing detoxification at the same time. It will require extensive remodeling of MDC. The estimated cost of the remodel is about $36 million. The county commission plans to spend the next few months working to find a private company willing to take over health care at the MDC and putting together a remodeling plan for the facility.

Relevant League Policies:

LWVNM – The term "drug" is meant to include all addictive drugs, including alcohol. LWVNM supports treatment of all persons with drug addiction...adequate funding for enforcement, rehabilitation, and education programs. These programs should be prudently and appropriately funded.

LWVNM supports the following policies for incarceration:
(2) addressing recidivism by instituting programs that focus on rehabilitation, education, behavioral health treatment, substance abuse recovery and transitional programs.



Sandoval County Commission Special meeting

September 23, 2026

Mary Templeton, observer (by video recording)

Present: Jordan Juarez (Chair), Jon Herr (Vice Chair), Michael Meek, Joshua Jones, Katherine Bruch

Description of Issues Relevant to the League

State of the County, July 2020 to present

County manager Wayne Johnson reported on County's progress since 2020, covering financial position, public works, public safety and animal control projects, economic development, and affordable housing. The County has completed two affordable housing projects, with a third to be completed within a year. Two additional projects are currently in talks. The County Manager's presentation can be found here: State of the County.

As background, the LWVNM supports current and future efforts to increase the availability of safe, decent, and affordable housing for moderate and low-income households.

Sandoval County Commission Website: https://www.sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/



Sandoval County Commission Special meeting

October 14, 2026

Mary Templeton, observer (by video recording)

Although this meeting appears on the Sandoval County Meeting Calendar, no meeting video has been posted to date. If a video becomes available, I will update this report.

Also, the Middle Rio Grande Housing Collaborative has not met for 2 months so there will not be a Housing report submitted this month. Observer reports will resume when these meetings are again held.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

6739 Academy Rd. NE, Suite 124
Albuquerque, NM 87109

The League of Women Voters of Central New Mexico, a tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization, is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy by education and advocacy.