



A force for progress on the Emerald Coast since 1962

July / August 2014

"Freedom unexercised may become freedom forfeited."

*Margaret Chase Smith
Former U.S. Senator and
Representative from Maine*



**Primary: 26 August
Books close: 28 July**



To vote in the 26 August Primary Election, you must register to vote before close of business on Monday, 28 July.

Register at the Supervisor's offices (1804 Lewis Turner Blvd FWB or 302 Wilson St N Crestview) or on-line at <http://www.govote-okaloosa.com/?id=10>.



League's Mission:

The League of Women Voters 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 through education and advocacy.

Message from the President

Did you vote in the last election? If not, why not? As citizens we are responsible for holding our elected officials accountable, and our votes give us the power to do just that.

The 2014 Primary election will decide which individuals will fill local offices for the next term, and because only one party qualified candidates, the Primary will be open to all registered voters in Okaloosa County. Which level of government affects Okaloosa County citizens on a daily basis? Here's a hint: it's **not** the federal government.

WSRE Rally 2014

WSRE Primary Rally 2014 will be held **July 21, 22 and 24 from 7-9:00 p.m.**, on **Cox channel 9 or satellite channel 23**. The Pensacola Bay Area and Okaloosa Leagues developed the questions for this televised forum, which will feature candidates for local office in Escambia, Santa Rosa and Okaloosa Counties.

Coming 15 July: Okaloosa / Walton 2014 Primary E-Voter

Can't tune into the Rally? We'll post the link to the video on our website (<http://lwvokaloosa.org/index.html>) within two days of the event. We will also publish the Primary E-Voter online on 15 July. Because there's no League in Walton County, we're including those local races in the E-Voter as well.

The E-Voter will be your "one-stop" shopping place for all election/voter information, including registration deadlines, early voting locations, links

HOT: Women's Hall of Fame nominations due 15 July

The Okaloosa County Commission on the Status of Women (OCCSW) is accepting nominations to the Okaloosa County Women's Hall of Fame through **15 July**.

The Women's Hall of Fame annually honors outstanding county women from past to present in displays at the

This year voters have multiple choices for the Board of County Commissioners, the Clerk of the Circuit Court and the School Board. These officials will determine County policy that affects each of us "up close and personal," so make your voice heard.

Democracy is not a spectator sport, so join League in strengthening our democracy by exercising your franchise. You can help make our wonderful community even better!

Mary Blackwell

Okaloosa races will be covered Tuesday night, and will include candidates for Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller, County Commissioner Districts 2 and 4, and School Board Districts 1, 3 and 5. District 1 U.S. Congressman Jeff Miller will also face off against challenger John Krause for the Republican nomination (date TBD).

to pertinent news articles, and survey responses from the candidates in each contested race. League urges everyone to be an educated voter and cast an informed ballot on 26 Aug. Your vote counts, so make the most of it!

If your organization is sponsoring a candidate event, please send your press release to info@lwvokaloosa.org, and we will send it out to our mailing list and post it on the website. Help us make our democracy work!

Okaloosa County Commission offices, the Niceville City Council Chambers and the Crestview Courthouse.

Learn more about OCCSW and the Hall of Fame here: <http://www.occsww.org/halloffame.htm>.

Submit an on-line nomination here: <https://tinyurl.com/on2z726>.

End of Session Report for 2014

The 2014 legislative session avoided controversial issues and broke the record for fewest number of bills passed. Here's a quick wrap-up.

The good:

- Approved: In-state tuition for undocumented students at Florida colleges and universities.
- Killed: Environmental regulatory bill extending water permits for 50 years.
- Killed: Carrying concealed weapons without a permit during mandatory evacuations.
- Killed: Carrying concealed weapons in schools.
- Approved: \$167M to restore Indian River Lagoon, the Everglades and Lake Okeechobee; \$30M to protect the rest of Florida's springs.

The bad:

- Killed: \$360M for springs protection.
- Killed: On-line voter registration.
- Approved: More tax dollars for private religious schools in direct violation of Florida's Constitution.
- Approved: More state intrusion into

- women's healthcare decisions.
- Revisions to Stand Your Ground only included legalization of warning shots.
- *Florida Forever* received only \$12.5M, exemplifying the need for passage of Amendment #1 in November.

The ugly: The legislature refused \$51 billion in federal money to expand Medicaid, leaving more than 1 million Floridians without affordable healthcare.

League's efforts to make our message heard were effective, thanks to our members' lobbying efforts.

Travel with League! Join fellow Leaguers in our nation's capital on 24-28 Sep and see all the sights. Visit Seneca Falls, NY, birthplace of the American suffragist movement, on 23-26 Oct. Explore Cumberland Island National Seashore on 3-5 Oct. Join a *Sisters Across the Straits* delegation to Cuba on 13-19 Oct, 10-16 Nov or 8-14 Dec. Visit the Seminole Indian Reservation on 15-16 Nov. For more info contact lwwfoffice@gmail.com.

Coming in November: 3 Ballot Amendments

An average of 8 measures appears on each Florida ballot, so 2014 is below average (thank goodness!). Here's what you can expect to see in November.

- **Amendment 1:** The *Florida Water and Land Conservation Initiative* provides funding for the Land Acquisition Trust Fund. This initiative is revenue neutral. Florida's Water & Land Legacy is the leading organization supporting Amendment 1. Opponents include Senator Don Gaetz and the Florida Chamber of Commerce.
- **Amendment 2:** The *Florida Right to Medical Marijuana Initiative* grants the right to use marijuana for the treatment of certain ailments when recommended by a physician. Implementation costs cannot be determined. People United for Medical Marijuana is leading the campaign to support this measure. Drug Free Florida is leading the opposition.
- **Amendment 3:** The *Florida Prospective Judicial Vacancies* measure was legislatively referred, and allows the governor to fill judicial vacancies by appointing a justice or judge from a slate of nominees even before a sitting judge completes his or her term.

Your League will be briefing about the pros and cons of each proposed amendment well before the election, so stay tuned for details.

Okaloosa County Women's Hall of Fame Induction 2014

In 1995 the Okaloosa County Commission on the Status of Women established the Okaloosa County Women's Hall of Fame to recognize women who have made an important impact on women and citizens in the county. Nominations are accepted from May through July, and the annual induction ceremony is held in August in conjunction with Women's Equality Day.

The 2014 Hall of Fame induction ceremony will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, 26 Aug, at the Student Services Center, NWFSC, Niceville Campus, in Room 133-34.

The event is free and open to the public, so please join us to honor these outstanding county women. RSVP to <https://tinyurl.com/qfs6wmh>.

2014 Calendar

WSRE Rally (Primary)

21, 22, 24 July, 7:00 p.m.
This televised candidate forum will showcase contested races in Okaloosa county on 22 July. Tune in to WSRE on satellite channel 23 or Cox channel 9.

Okaloosa County Women's Hall of Fame Induction

26 Aug: 7:00 p.m.
NWFSC, 100 College Blvd, Niceville, Rm 133-34 SSC
Honor the outstanding county women who have made a positive impact on our community and its residents.

Preserving Florida's Springs & Aquifers September

Date TBD
Learn how to preserve our precious water resources.

Proposed Constitutional Amendments

October: Date TBD
Get the details on ballot initiatives before you vote.

WSRE Rally (General)

October: Date TBD
This televised candidate forum showcases contested local races in our county.

Spotlight on the Homeless

November: Date TBD
Opportunity Inc. Board Chair Judy Byrne Riley will update us on Continuum of Care activities and services.

Holiday Party

December: Date TBD

Update on Commercial Green Energy

January: Date TBD
Is Florida exploiting renewable energy or just waiting for the power to go off? Find out.

E-Registration for Voters

February: Date TBD
Learn about what's next for Florida voter registration.

Juvenile Justice Process, Diversion Programs

March: Date TBD
How are youthful offenders handled in our county? Find out at this meeting.