

The Fairfield-Suisun Chamber's Advocacy Council heard presentations Tuesday (April 9) from representatives of the League of Women Voters and Solano County's Registrar of Voters.

With less than 11 months to go before the March 3, 2020 primary, a big focus for both the League and the Registrar of Voters Office is educating the public on the resources available to them prior to the election.

Key points from the meeting included:

John Gardner, Assistant Registrar of Voters, Solano County

- The March 3, 2020 primary is going to be a “game-changer” because it is much earlier than other primary elections in California
- With automatic voter registration now available through the DMV, the county is seeing a large increase in the number of registered voters
- There are approximately 230,000 registered voters in Solano County and 70% vote by mail
- Those who vote at the polls will be seeing changes next year. The state has de-serviced the county's voting equipment used over the last 10 years. New technology will be implemented for 2020. The county has received a grant of \$2 million for the \$3 million equipment.
- There is some discussion at the county level about switching to Regional Vote Centers in the future. Currently, 12 counties in the state operate Regional Vote Centers during an election. These replace neighborhood polling locations, and are open for 10 days instead of just one. Counties that have Regional Vote Centers in place did see an increase in voter turnout last November, but so too did Solano County with its neighborhood polling locations. The thought is that a Regional Vote Center would improve voter turnout overall, and would also be better equipped to address common ballot issues. There would be considerably less Regional Vote Centers than neighborhood polling locations, but voters would have 10 days to visit one.
- The county is looking for volunteers to visit area colleges and encourage young people to vote. They are also looking for area businesses interested in being a ballot drop-off location.
- Fun Fact: Voters in Solano County can check the status of their ballot at www.solanocounty.com/elections Once you mail in or submit your ballot, you can check online to see if it has been received and counted. You can also sign up for text alerts.
- Fun Fact: Your signed signature on your mail-in ballot is very, very important. Teams of two Registrar of Voters employees check every ballot signature and make sure it matches your DMV signature. If it does not match, they are able to pull ballot signatures from past years to compare. This is also where signing up for text alerts can be very important – if there is an issue with your ballot, the office can contact you directly.

Margo McGlone, Solano County League of Women Voters

- The Solano County League of Women Voters is a grassroots organization comprised of women AND MEN that encourages informed and active participation in government and also works to increase understanding of major public policy issues
- The League is strictly non-partisan and does not support or oppose candidates at any level of government. The emphasis for this group is on education and being informed on issues.
- New members are always welcome. The annual fee is \$70. Students who are registered to vote can join the League for free
- Educating younger voters, especially those in college, is very important. Trained volunteers visit schools, including Solano Community College, to register voters and encourage the students to vote on Election Day. They also visit classrooms and give presentations on the branches of government. The hope is to one day create a League chapter at Solano Community.
- The League is also known for hosting and co-hosting public forums, debates, town hall meetings, and meet-the-candidate events in cities throughout Solano County.
- To learn more about how you can be involved in the Solano County League of Women Voters, email LWVBenicia@gmail.com