



# La Palabra

The newsletter of the League of Women Voters of New Mexico

VOL. 56 NO. 2 FALL 2008

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The League of Women Voters of New Mexico, a nonpartisan political organization encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy

## Fair Representation Consensus Meetings Open League's Fall Schedule

The two-year **Fair Representation Study** has reached the consensus stage. This November, the group will be visiting each local League to get your opinions, in order to formulate a new state position on reapportionment and redistricting. When the group solicited the opinions of members last spring, the general feeling was that it would be best to concentrate on redistricting for the 2011 post-census reapportionment. The consensus questions, thus, will focus on who should draw the redistricting plans, what criteria should be used, and how the public should be involved.

The schedule of unit meetings is:

Nov 10	Las Cruces	Noon-2 pm
Nov 12	Santa Fe Unit	Noon
Nov 13	CNM: Luncheon Meeting	11:45-1:45 pm
Nov 17	CNM: Midtown Unit	1:00-3:00 pm
Nov 18	CNM: Evening Unit	6:00-8:00 pm
Nov 19	CNM: Sandoval County Unit	Noon-1:30 pm
Nov 20	Los Alamos Unit	7:00-9:00 pm

Information to help you participate in the consensus discussions has been provided in a three-page Study Guide distributed to all the local Leagues for their November *Voters*. It's brief and will be supplemented with additional handouts at the Consensus Unit meetings in November. The Board-approved consensus questions appear in this *La Palabra* (p. 5 and 6). Also, we urge you to explore the Fair Representation web page, recently updated, for additional background information:

[www.lwvcnm.org/fair/](http://www.lwvcnm.org/fair/)

## INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSIONS

*Cheryl Haaker, Chair, Fair Representation Study*

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, twelve states currently give primary responsibility for developing redistricting plans to some form of commission. These states are Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Washington. A discussion of several of these independent redistricting commissions can be found on the Fair Representation web page: [www.lwvcnm.org/fair/](http://www.lwvcnm.org/fair/).

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Voter Protection, Election 2008 and Beyond

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The League of Women Voters sponsors and participates in several initiatives to protect voters' rights. These go beyond its long-time activities such as opposition to potentially discriminatory voter ID requirements and support for improving the training of poll workers and polling place management, although, of course, these continue to be important focus areas.

One new item on the voter protection agenda is the maintenance of the statewide voter database systems mandated by the 2002 Help America Vote Act (HAVA). For example, there have recently been several reports and news stories about the purging of voters from the lists of registrants in many states. This is, of course, a regular practice, necessary to keep voting lists reasonably up-to-date, but HAVA sets some guidelines that appear to have been violated. At least three states appear to have been purging their roles within 90 days of this year's election. Many more have been making improper use of the flawed Social Security database. (New York Times article at <http://tinyurl.com/3mawao>; additional information from PIRG at [www.uspirg.org/voting-democracy](http://www.uspirg.org/voting-democracy) and the Brennan Center at [www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/voter\\_purges](http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/voter_purges).) And, Las Vegas, NM registration problems are highlighted in a current Rolling Stone article by Robert F. Kennedy and Greg Palast (warning: this article is definitely not nonpartisan!)

Particularly pernicious are laws that require "perfect matches" between the voter databases and other databases. (Am I Katherine Campbell, Katherine S. Campbell, Katherine Smith Campbell?) Four states, including "swing states" Iowa and Florida, require perfect matches in all fields, including SSN and address as well as name. Yet a study by the Brennan Center finds a discrepancy rate of up to 20% between voter and driver license databases just from data input errors made by government clerks. Large numbers of new

registrants are not being entered on the roles for this reason.

The League's VOTE411.org website provides voters with access to their state's registration information so that they can check their own registration status. In New Mexico this site is [voterview.state.nm.us](http://voterview.state.nm.us).

The LWVEF's Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP, <http://tinyurl.com/58zgas>) program started three years ago with emphasis on six states. Three more were added last year, and this year New Mexico together with Arizona and Colorado have been included. Two members of the state Board, Linda Moscarella and Lora Lucero, will participate in a PAVP training opportunity in December. This national program works on all of the voter protection issues mentioned above and helps individual states put together advocacy plans appropriate for their particular states.

LWVNM also is represented on the steering committee of the new Common Cause NM initiative Count Every Vote New Mexico ([www.counteveryvotennm.org](http://www.counteveryvotennm.org)), modeled on a similar program in Colorado. Prior to the election, this group is concentrating on providing hotlines and rapid response teams of attorneys to answer questions and address problems with voting, but once the election is over the focus will shift to analysis of the election and directions for improvement of our system in New Mexico.

Continuing improvement is the name of the quality assurance game, and New Mexico has made great strides in recent years. This year the Secretary of State has made a huge effort to ensure that the training of clerks, judges of elections and poll workers is uniform across the state. This year for the first time there will be a statewide random audit of the scanners used in our elections. We hope every voter will exercise his or her vote this year in what is a fundamentally sound New Mexico election system.

*Kathy Campbell, President*

## BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

*Bonnie Burn, Secretary*

The Board met on October 18 at New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, Socorro. The **consensus questions** were approved for the **Fair Representation Study**. The **Water Study Group** produced a CD of its June 19 Forum at Los Alamos that was given to local Presidents for sharing with members. Plans for **League Day** were discussed including the possibilities for action on the death penalty, health care reform, and Tax Incremental Development Districts. The **Voters' Key** will be updated after the election.

The next board meeting is January 10, 2009, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., in Albuquerque.

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## YOUTH CORPS INVITATION

*Linda Moscarella, Vice President*

The League was asked to speak to the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps in Taos about voting process and also to help register those who were still unregistered. This group is part of AmeriCorps and is required to be nonpartisan in any election related activities, so the League was the right organization for this job, and I was glad to do it. I registered four people, and advised some others on how to find out about absentee voting in other states. I gave out information on early voting in Taos and urged those who could to take advantage of it because it would probably be quicker and easier. It's been a long time since I talked to a room full of 18-25 year olds whose main concern was getting to the bank with their pay checks before 5 pm on Friday! I enjoyed it!

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## OXFAM AMERICA: Presentation on Global Climate Change

*Jody Larson, President,  
LWV of Santa Fe County*

In September, LWV of New Mexico and LWV of Santa Fe County co-sponsored

informative presentations in Albuquerque and Santa Fe with Oxfam America. These Sisters on the Planet events featured speakers from the U.S. Gulf Coast and from Senegal, whose mission was to put a human face on global climate change. From the reactions of those in attendance, they certainly did.

Sharon Henshaw, a cosmetologist from Mississippi, spoke of the effects of Hurricane Katrina, which destroyed her house, car, and business, and resulted in 80 people she knew dying of depression related to the storm. Mrs. Wore Seck, from Senegal, spoke of the effects on farmers and fisher folk in her home country where the growing season has become shorter by two entire months due to the rains becoming shorter in duration.

A lot of data was presented to support the widely-accepted facts that global climate change is real and human-caused. We were urged to help those hit first and worst, by cutting harmful emissions and seeking equitable solutions, meaning that we must ensure that proposed solutions and energy pathways are pursued in an equitable manner. Oxfam believes developed nations have a moral imperative to reduce our carbon footprint. Certainly no one who attended these events could leave believing anything else

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## ON MEMBERSHIP

*Johnnie Aldrich, Director*

Total NM League membership as of October 15, 2009 is 653:

- 23 - Members-at-Large
- 330 - Central New Mexico
- 60 - Los Alamos
- 164 - Santa Fe
- 76 - Greater Las Cruces

Presidents are asked to remind their Membership Directors to update the LWVUS online Membership Database. Per member payments for 2009 will be based on member census as of January 31, 2009.

# LEGISLATIVE ACTION NEWS: LEAGUE DAY AT THE LEGISLATURE

*Dick Mason, Director*

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**TUESDAY - February 3, 2009 - 8 am to 5 pm**  
**NEW MEXICO STATE LAND OFFICE**  
**MORGAN HALL - 310 OLD SANTA FE TRAIL, SANTA FE**  
**(just down the street from the Round House)**

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The 2009 sixty-day Legislative Session will be dealing with many pieces of legislation that the League of Women Voters has been following. Legislation to be considered will deal with areas such as: health care reform; natural resources; water; climate change; public education; campaign finance and ethics reform; election reform; rights for domestic partners; repeal of the death penalty and replacing it with life without parole; a woman's right to choose; and drug courts. **We Need Your Voice – Please plan to attend League Day.**

Although reservations are not required we would like to have an idea of the number of attendees. Please e-mail Dick Mason at the following: polirich(at)aol.com; or call the League office at 505-884-8441.

**Transportation:** Contact your local League if you can drive or if you need a ride. Parking near the State House is hard to find during the session. The state does operate a shuttle from other parking lots. Get the schedule and locations at:  
<http://nmshtd.state.nm.us/upload/images/Schedule2009.pdf>.

**Lunch:** Bring or buy a lunch. For \$10, you may purchase a sack lunch that will include a

veggie or meat sandwich, chips, cookie and drink. Reservations are required and must be made by 3 pm, Thursday, January 29. Call in your order and choice of sandwich to the League in Santa Fe, 1-505-982-9766, or e-mail Jane Gaziano at: jeg7(at)aol.com. Questions? Call Dick Mason at 1-505-994-0685.

**Accommodations:** **Garrett's Desert Inn**, which is located across the street from the Land Office at 311 Old Santa Fe Trail, offers a legislative rate of \$59 plus tax. That doesn't include breakfast, but a restaurant is attached. There may be a charge of \$8 for parking if you check out the morning of League Day. Call 1-800-888-2145 to make a reservation. Mention the LWV and ask for the legislative rate.

The LWVNM Action Committee will be sending out email Action Alerts throughout the 2009 Legislative session. If you are not part of the LWVNM Topics List please see information below and sign up.

**For further information on League Day please call 505-884-8441 or visit the state website at [www.lwvnm.org](http://www.lwvnm.org)**

**LWVNMTopics list-serve** functions as the **Action Alert** system for the League in New Mexico. If you are not already a member, sign up now before the legislative session.

**To sign up**, send a blank e-mail message to [lwvNMtopics-subscribe@yahoo.com](mailto:lwvNMtopics-subscribe@yahoo.com) from the address where you wish to receive LWVNMTopics messages. You will get back a message from yahoo.com requesting confirmation that you indeed wish to join this group. Ignore the contents of this message! Just hit the "Reply" button and then the "Send" button to confirm that you wish to join. Then you will receive a second welcoming message from yahoo.com that you should save, since it will tell you how to post messages to the list, access its archives and other useful information. **That's all there is to it!**



League of Women Voters of New Mexico  
**Consensus Questions  
on Redistricting**  
*Fair Representation Study Group*



**Under the current system of electing representatives to Congress and the Legislature,** there has been very little turnover of elected officials and fewer candidates for election. Voters have few (often no) meaningful choices and, as a result, are less able to hold their government accountable. An opportunity for change is coming up: the 2010 Census will result in reapportioning and re-drawing the district lines for the U.S. Congressional and New Mexico Legislature seats, and for other state-level offices.

**Current LWVNM position:**

*"The State League supports apportionment for the Legislature which shall be based substantially on population and shall meet the provisions of the Federal Voting Rights Act (1982)".*

At the last decennial redistricting, the New Mexico League was asked to become involved in the process, but after consideration, decided that the LWVNM position was too generic to permit political action. **Your responses in these Consensus Units will determine how the state position should be updated so that the League can become involved in the 2011 redistricting process.**

**1a. Who should be responsible for drafting a plan / drawing a map that assures representation in the public interest?**

The New Mexico Legislature, according to the NM Constitution, *"may by statute reapportion its membership"*; the Governor then ratifies or vetoes the plans. At present, individual legislators commission plans to be drawn and the Legislature selects from them, and amends the plans as required. While both the Legislators and the Governor are elected by the public, legislators have a conflict of interest in that by establishing their own districts, they're choosing their constituents. Who should **develop** plans, which may subsequently be voted upon?

The Legislature?      An independent commission?      Other?

**1b. What qualifications or characteristics should people who draw the redistricting maps have?**

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Consensus Questions on Redistricting *(Continued from page 5)*

### 2. Should the criteria used for redistricting in New Mexico be modified or expanded?

Current Federal law requires equal population and protecting the strength of minority and language groups through the Voting Rights Act. Most states also include contiguity, compactness, and preservation of counties and other political subdivisions. NM statute specifies only that single member districts will be formed.

Redistricting criteria, of necessity, are often at odds with one another. What importance should be given to each of the following criteria? Rate each.

Criteria:	Essential	Important	Not important	Not to be considered in 2001	Used
a. Contiguous	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	yes
b. Reasonably compact	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	yes
c. Respect communities of interest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	yes
d. Residence of incumbents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	yes
e. Preserve "core" of previous districts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	yes
f. Natural geographic boundaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	yes
g. Jurisdictional (municipal, county, etc) boundaries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	yes
h. Be connected by transportation links	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	no
i. Partisan voting history	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	no
j. Political competitiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	no
k. Not favor any political party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	no

**3a. Should the redistricting process include opportunities for public involvement,** such as open public hearings throughout the state, public comment on redistricting criteria, broadcast of meetings, all documents made available free and on a timely basis, and public education via public service announcements and other means?

**3b. What would encourage you to participate in the redistricting process?**

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

Make Sure You Cast a Ballot!

This election is too important for anyone to sit on the sidelines. We applaud the good work of the voting rights community that has led to increased energy and a rise in new voter registrations in this election year. Long before the term “third party registration” was coined, the League of Women Voters too was working to assure that every voter has fair access to voter registration.

Now it is time to translate that new energy into historic levels of participation in the election of 2008. Visit **voteview.state.nm.us** to find your polling location, or call your County Clerk. Many County Clerk websites also offer downloadable sample ballots. Find the New Mexico Leagues' *Voters' Guides* on line at [www/lwvnm.org/VGuide2008/](http://www/lwvnm.org/VGuide2008/). There you will also find links to many other sources of information about Election 2008.

Take advantage of the early and absentee voting options in New Mexico to vote at a time that is most convenient for you. Or celebrate democracy by voting at your polling place on November 4 in the company of your neighbors.

The most important thing is to make your voice heard in this election. **VOTE!**

Katherine Campbell, President  
League of Women Voters of New Mexico

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### **VOTERS' GUIDE COMMITTEE REPORT**

*Jennice Fishburn, Chair*

Through the marvels of conference calls, e-mails, and the League of Women Voters of New Mexico (LWVNM) website, the state *Voters' Guide* Committee planned, prepared, and disseminated the 2008 LWVNM fall

election information about statewide candidates, constitutional amendments, and bond questions.

Our process began July 3<sup>rd</sup> with a committee conference call to identify issues to be addressed through candidate questionnaires and to begin drafting the questions. Draft questions were presented to the LWVNM Board for consideration at its July meeting. In late July, letters and questionnaires were sent to candidates for the following offices: U.S. Senate, New Mexico Supreme Court, and the state Court of Appeals. (Local Leagues preferred to gather information from the U.S. House of Representatives candidates.)

Next, work began on the constitutional amendments and bond questions with the goal of being able to send final drafts to local Leagues for their *Voters' Guides* as early as possible. As a result, we were able to provide all the statewide election information to our LWVNM webmaster and local League *Voters' Guide* editors in late August/early September.

I want to express my great appreciation to the hard-working members of our LWVNM *Voters' Guide* Committee: Becky Shankland and Sally Wilkins, LWV of Los Alamos; Meredith Machen, LWV of Santa Fe County; Josephine Porter and Andrea Targhetta, LWV of Central New Mexico; Janet Stevens and Donna Tate, LWV of Greater Las Cruces; and Kathy Campbell, LWVNM, with an extra “thank you” to Jo, Andrea, and webmaster Cheryl Haaker for being mentors during my learning curve as the new LWVNM *Voters' Guide* editor and a new resident of New Mexico.

In addition to the *Voters' Guide* production, a subcommittee composed of Becky, Meredith, and yours truly, developed suggested style guidelines for *Voters' Guide* editing and proofreading, and provided the document to Kathy and our committee with the hope that it might be a helpful resource to local Leagues as well as to our state committee.

## LOCAL LEAGUE NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENTS

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### Central New Mexico - Diane Goldfarb

Since May, we had an active primary season and summer. Together with Health Action New Mexico, we co-sponsored a pre-primary forum for candidates for the First Congressional District. Covering only health care issues, this highly successful forum attracted all six candidates for that office. We once again staffed the office for two full days for the primary and added a second phone line.

Our summer general meetings featured Albuquerque City Councilor, Isaac Benton, who gave us some basics on how the City Council works, retired foreign service officer, Patricia Kushlis, who spoke on the world's view of America, and LWVUS President, Mary Wilson, who gave us an update on LWVUS internal and external affairs. Our fall unit programs have dealt with the repeal of the death penalty and Tax Increment Development Districts.

The Drug Policy Study Committee has been especially active in recent months. One of its projects was a presentation in August on pain management at the New Mexico Conference on Aging. This committee, led by Dee Watkins, has received accolades for its fine work.

The 2008 General Election *Voters' Guide* was launched at an October reception and received excellent newspaper and television coverage. It was expanded this year to cover Valencia as well as Bernalillo and Sandoval counties. 75,000 copies were distributed through the three-county area and it appears on our website. A grant from LWVUS Education Fund and the Program on Constitutional and Legal Policy of the Open Society Institute also helped to fund this year's 48-page guide and pay for expanded coverage of judicial races.

With another grant from the same sources, we sponsored an October 22 forum on "Safeguarding U.S. Democracy by Promoting An Independent Judiciary." Five candidates

up for election to the NM Supreme Court, the 2nd Judicial District Court and the Metropolitan Court participated.

Our Board held its annual retreat in September to talk about League basics and future goals. The Board is reviewing positions and policies affected by our name and boundary change.

### Greater Las Cruces - Cathy Mathews

In September, "Civil Liberties: Post election 2008" was discussed by Peter G. Simonson, executive director, American Civil Liberties Union of New Mexico. The presentation was sponsored by LWV/GLC, American Association of University Women and ACLU, Las Cruces.

Ambassador Delano Lewis, director, NMSU's International Relations Institute, updated us about the direction and projects undertaken by the Institute that was established in November 2007.

The Election Procedures/Voter Turnout Committee completed a voter satisfaction survey during the primary election in June, and will cover a telephone bank to help voters with election information on November 4.

Metro Court Study Group accepted a resolution of support from the Las Cruces City Council that was taken to the New Mexico Municipal League and adopted by that organization as a legislative agenda item for support during the 2009 Legislative Session. The Committee met with County Commissioners who considered a resolution of support but in a final vote failed to support it. The committee met with Governor Richardson when he visited Las Cruces, and he offered his support.

Voter Services has been very active. Voter registration drives were conducted, two candidates' forums were held, and a *Voters' Guide* was produced.



## **Los Alamos** - *Executive Committee*

The Voter Services team of Becky Shankland and Sally Wilkins was very busy these last two months preparing the *Voters' Guide* and organizing two candidates' forums. The League co-sponsored the forums with the American Association of University Women (AAUW).

The September 22 forum for the 3rd Congressional District race included the three candidates running for that seat, Ben R. Lujan (D), Dan East (R) and Carol Miller (I). It was well attended by local citizens and included a discussion on a wide-range of topics, including the current economic crisis, global warming, energy independence, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and Los Alamos National Laboratory. This event received good press coverage by both the *Los Alamos Monitor* and *The Santa Fe New Mexican*.

On October 1, 2008, the League/AAUW forum hosted the Los Alamos County Council candidates, the Public Regulation Commission (PRC) candidates and candidates for other local offices. All of the five candidates for council attended. Rich Lass, Green candidate for the PRC spoke as did Mary Pat Kraemer, unopposed Democratic candidate for County Clerk, and Jeannette Wallace, unopposed Republican candidate for the House. Democratic candidate for PRC, Jerome Block, did not attend. The unopposed Democratic candidates for the three Senate seats that include Los Alamos County also did not attend.

The League published its *Voters' Guide* as an insert to the October 5, 2008 *Los Alamos Monitor*. Copies of the *Guide* also are available at our local libraries, senior centers and the County's KANDU center.

## **Santa Fe** - *Jody Larson*

League activities abound in Santa Fe County this beautiful fall season! Voters services have predominated: Our *Voters' Guide* was

published in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* on Friday, October 3, and we have delivered most of our 5,000 extra copies to the County Clerk, public libraries, and other venues. In addition, we held a well-attended and very well-reported candidates' forum on October 5, featuring the three candidates for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District seat. Kudos to our Voter Services Chair, Meredith Machen, and her committee for their fine work in support of these endeavors. We also are grateful to LWVNM for its revenue sharing support of the *Guide*, as our costs doubled with this issue, in great part due to the sharp increase in the cost of newsprint.

We also co-sponsored a nonpartisan forum on women's issues related to the election, "Just the Facts," covering many topics including health, pay equity, and financial markets. The local AAUW and the NM Commission on the Status of Women co-sponsored the forum, which attracted over 70 attendees and may have garnered some new members.

Our Action Committee is reviewing Santa Fe County's Oil and Gas Drilling Ordinance, and we will submit comments soon. The County Transparency Project continues, and we are monitoring other local issues including the proposed real estate transfer tax and the city budget.

In September, our general meeting topic was youth issues, and featured speakers from the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program; the Veterans for Peace Full Disclosure program, which educates young people about the myths and realities of military service and their rights under No Child Left Behind; and YouthWorks, a local organization focusing on helping young people who are low income or in the juvenile justice system, or are involved with gangs or alcohol/drug abuse. In October, our speakers will educate us about water quality with respect to the Buckman Direct Diversion project.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF NEW MEXICO  
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**LWVNM BOARD CALENDAR**

**2008**

**December 10** *La Palabra* Deadline

**2009**

**January 10** Board Meeting - Albuquerque

**February 3** League Day at the Legislature

**March 21** Board Meeting - Socorro  
*La Palabra* Deadline

**May 16-17** LWVNM Convention  
Albuquerque

**8th Annual New Partners for Smart  
Growth: Building Safe, Healthy and  
Livable Communities**

January 22-24, 2009  
Albuquerque Convention Center

Conference registration and  
further information:

Contact: Lora Lucero  
Loralucero(at)aol.com

SAVE