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2015 VOTERS GUIDE

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER LAS CRUCES

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LAS CRUCES MUNICIPAL ELECTION TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2015

A municipal election will be held on Tuesday, November 3, 2015. This municipal election will fill positions for City Council Districts 1, 2 and 4, and a Presiding Municipal Judge, for the Las Cruces Municipal Court.

If you are a citizen of the United States, 18 years of age or older on election day, a resident of the city and are registered to vote in Doña Ana County, you may vote in this municipal election. If you live in Districts 1, 2, or 4, you will also be eligible to vote for a city council candidate from your district. All eligible voters can vote for the Mayor and a Presiding Municipal Judge.

If you have a question concerning the election, please contact the Las Cruces City Clerk's Office at (575) 541-2115 or the online website: <http://www.las-cruces.org>. The Voters Guide is also available online at the League's website www.lwvlc.org.

Material in the voting Information section was correct as of October 6, 2015. The League is not responsible for any changes made by the Las Cruces City Clerk or Doña Ana County Bureau of Elections between that date and the election.

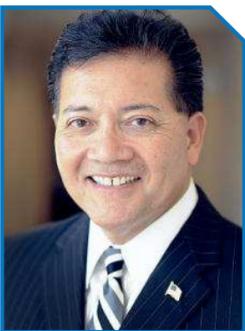
The information in this Voters Guide was obtained by means of questionnaires sent to all the candidates. Their answers are printed exactly as received by the League. Because of space restrictions, responses from all candidates are limited to 75 words per question. Also, lists are converted to paragraphs and responses are converted to normal text.

The League of Women Voters of Greater Las Cruces is a nonpartisan organization that provides information about political issues and candidates for public office in order to promote greater citizen responsibility and participation in government. Because the League is nonpartisan, it DOES NOT support or oppose any political party or candidate. It DOES publish and distribute factual information for citizens to use when preparing to vote.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES FOR MAYOR

1. Identify three issues in the City of Las Cruces that can be addressed by city government and explain how you would resolve them.
2. Give two examples of issues that can be resolved by city and county government working together.
3. Explain where you stand on public financing of elections.
4. What are your priorities for the City of Las Cruces in order of importance?

CANDIDATES RESPONSE



Mayor Kenneth Miyagishima

1. One task of the city is to develop, through an open and inclusive process, a unified vision for the community. A key part of that vision has been good quality of life for all residents, which means investing in our streets, neighborhoods, parks and public safety. The City of Las Cruces also plays an important role in ensuring orderly growth and development, through a commitment to comprehensive planning for the city and region.
2. One of the best ways to maximize scarce public resources is for the city and county to share infrastructure and services, as in the joint construction and operation of the 911 Regional Dispatch Center. The City and County should also coordinate economic development, especially in response to opportunities in the rapidly expanding border region of our county.
3. Campaign contributions and large infusions of outside money into local campaigns can have a negative effect on good governance, including the perception that decisions are being made for reasons other than the public interest. For that reason I support a public financing option for city candidates. It will allow a wider variety of people to run for office without their having to raise large amounts of money in order to participate in the political process.
4. My priorities for the City of Las Cruces start with open, transparent and inclusive government decision-making, which makes everything else possible. Next comes investing in the neighborhoods, parks and other infrastructure that make this a community we are proud of and where we enjoy living. Underlying all this is economic development that builds on our strengths as a city and region, provides well-paying jobs, and maintains our local character and quality of life.



Mayor Eugenia "Gina" Montoya Ortega

1. Public Safety, we need to improve relationships with all law enforcement agencies. Economic Development, we need to create a business friendly environment. And the not listening to the voices/needs of constituents/citizens, which are not being heard. We need to move one City Council Meeting to an evening time, which would be more convenient for constituents/citizens to participate. And encourage citizens to volunteer to serve on boards, commissions, authorities and agencies.
2. We need to respect each other's boundaries, roles and responsibilities. We should not be in any position to tell each other not to do what we do and do what we say. We need to think more carefully of the consequences and the impact it has our counterparts before we act. The GRT is a prime example. We should not be crying foul on others for the same thing we do.
3. I would support this as a positive way to allow those to do one's job without outside influences. It would improve transparency, open and honest government by eliminating special interest groups from holding those who they helped finance feet to the fire.
4. Public Safety, Economic Development, Giving our Constituents/Citizens back their voice, Infrastructure, Mental Health Svcs., Business Friendly/Family Friendly/Pet Friendly City, Investment in our Youth/Seniors, cutting wasteful spending and working closely with LCPS and NMSU.



Mayor Miguel Silva

1. Initiate term limits on the Mayor and Council positions which would require changing the City's Charter through an election that would go to the public for a vote. Change priorities of City funding allowing more work on our crumbling streets and roads, in all parts of the City. Develop a detailed plan for allocating the remaining \$ 111 million dollars of the Hold Harmless GRT funds through working with Council, Staff and citizens groups.
2. The Memorial Hospital management company has \$8 million dollars owed to the City and County. Both must agree to ask for it to be transferred. We need the County to join the City and request the funds and they will be transferred, \$4 million dollars due to each of us. A key to regional economic development and recruiting businesses is to reassess each of our roles in the process.
3. It is clear that there are issues with election financing at the Federal level which could be addressed well by public financing. At the City level, I am not aware of pressing issues which public financing would resolve, and it could cost the City several hundred thousand dollars to implement. I will support public financing when I see there is a problem it can solve, and it is worth the cost to the City.
4. To make sure our City government represents and serves all of our residents. To be a strong and outspoken advocate for economic growth that will bring jobs and economic stability to Las Cruces. To improve services to all of our residents, including our existing and future businesses. To ensure that Las Cruces is a city where every resident has a fair shot at leading a full life.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CANDIDATES FOR CITY COUNCIL

1. What is your position on the minimum wage law recently approved by the City Council?
2. What should the City do to address potential water shortage?
3. Explain where you stand on public financing of elections.
4. Do you support the current development plans for the former Las Cruces Country club property? Explain.

CANDIDATES RESPONSE



City Council District 1 Melecio "Eli" Guzman

1. Any issue like this must be approached in a responsible way. At this stage, I feel as if we need more input from the public, the business community and experts. Our nonprofit organizations, businesses and others have been impacted by this increase. We need to fully evaluate it before moving forward.
2. We should take this issue seriously and take precautions now to prevent any water shortages.
3. I feel it could be good or bad. Good for the person who is truly in need of financial help. For the person who will take running serious and not waste tax payers money. It could be bad, because when money is handed to someone, you run the risk of them not taking it seriously. Therefore, the candidate might take that money for granted and not work hard.
4. The current state of the property is an eyesore. The owners of the Country Club had the right to sell their property. I support anything that will clean up eyesores in the community, raise property values and bring in better paying jobs.



City Council District 1 Kasandra Gandara

1. As a fierce supporter of democracy and the democratic process, I am strongly in favor of moving forward with all phases of the Minimum Wage Ordinance. The people have spoken and the ordinance has been enacted. As City Councilor it will be my position, as well as my privilege to ensure that this ordinance, and its inherent promise of better days ahead for all Las Cruces, is protected and fulfilled.
2. Although I applaud planned Capital Improvements for existing water supply and ground water monitoring wells, I strongly believe that water scarcity is as much a challenge of reimagination as it is of remediation. Las Cruces is home to vibrant intellectual, agricultural and industrial stakeholder communities engaged in groundbreaking water security thought leadership. As City Councilor, I look forward to tapping into this rich natural resource in a climate of collaboration and innovation.
3. Having been honored to receive a significant number of small donations from voters, I am a strong proponent of public financing of elections. In my conversations with these donors, it has been clear that in addition to supporting my campaign, they were investing in the future of Las Cruces. I am proud to advocate for legislation that engages citizen stakeholders and encourages understanding that every voice and vote makes a difference.
4. While I obviously did not have the opportunity to vote on this issue, I stand for improving the quality of life for all Las Cruces. As such, I am both hopeful and concerned about the development as proposed. Las Cruces is aging and is in need of promised medical services and professionals. But it is unclear that these benefits, should they actually materialize, will be accessible to all Las Cruces.



City Council District 1 Steve D. Calderazzo

Candidate withdrew

1. It's my opinion, like most items in the recent past, they ignored important details which have now hurt this community more than helped it. They've created a gap between the national push for minimum wage increases and therefore have made Las Cruces an undesirable place to do business. Only established local businesses are going to be affected and will be forced to make some tough decisions.
2. Drought issues are real and should be taken seriously. According to a Sun-News article, Elephant Butte Lake is predicted to take in half of average. I think farmers in the region should be heavily involved in determining an action plan with regard to emergency drought conditions. The first stage obviously being water conservation strategies.
3. I think focusing on "leveling the playing field" is important. I'm not sure yet if a \$2,300 one-time donation gives anyone an advantage. In fact, after going through this process I've found there are other more important voting issues such as the rules concerning the petitioning process.
4. I support most growth opportunities. I think with regard to the old Las Cruces Country Club, their planning is thoughtful and a much-needed boost to the Las Cruces economy. I also believe we've got to increase the involvement of local companies. The argument that these projects are too much for the labor force in this area may have some validity but that should spark a discussion about how to keep those dollars in Las Cruces.