



**Meeting Report for October 19, 2009  
By Denny Schneider**

## **Chuck DeVore**

**State Assembly member Chuck DeVore:  
Nuclear Energy is a safe, efficient, and  
cost-effective energy source for California.**

Chuck DeVore started his talk by telling us that the implementation of additional nuclear energy plants in California has been banned by statute since 1974. He explained that several factors at the state and federal level discouraged the use of nuclear energy. Only existing nuclear plants at the time were allowed to continue operation in Ca. (Nine percent of L.A. DWP power is nuclear but it comes from the Palo Verde Plant located in Arizona.)

### **Why reevaluate Nuclear today?**

**Issue 1-** Green House Gas emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> (GSG) from Nuclear plants is lowest per KWH of any of the other "green" sources including geothermal when all factors including plant construction and operation are included. The French extensively use nuclear power and are able to achieve goods and services output while creating half of the GSG per output quantity than the US. We are the largest user of nuclear power in the world (103 nuclear plants) but we are a distant second as a percentage of our power output source at about 20% in the US (and 13% in CA).

**Issue 2-** It's hard to safely replace all of the fossil fuels. 50% of power generated in the U.S. use coal as it's energy source. Even the cleanest coal burning systems cause major particle contamination in the air. About 30,000 people prematurely die in the US from air illness related causes. Nuclear is best on this issue. Even natural gas plants create major amounts of GSG compared to nuclear.

**Issue 3-** Security and oil independence: Nuclear frees up oil (gas/diesel) or natural gas for use in autos and trucks that would otherwise have to be purchased outside of the US. In California 47% of our power comes from gas driven turbines. This frees up cleaner natural gas for use in auto and truck fleets. Some of the money spent is going into the hands of people not friendly to the US.

**Issue 4-** Dollars not spent outside the US can be used for better uses here at home including care for the aged.

**California is only one of six states banning the building of nuclear plants.** It was enacted in 1976 by legislative action before a public initiative vote to do the same was soundly defeated. Since the legislature passed the law, it may overturn this law without requiring an initiative process. In 1983 the Supreme Court upheld the nuclear plant production ban using the theory that although federal law preempts state law, the storage of spent fuel could cause a state problem. At that time fuel recycling was not allowed and storage sites were scarce. Since then the federal government has accepted responsibility for storage of spent fuel (and allows it on-site at nuclear plants). Recycling of spent fuel is now accepted practice except in places like California where it is prohibited by law. California has the lowest use of electrical power per capita. This is due in part to our moderate climate conditions and ongoing energy conservation, and the loss of power no longer needed by the manufacturing industry that has left the state.

The urgency increases as we attempt to implement efforts toward the goals of AB32, Global Green House Gas(GHG) reduction. Starting January 1, 2010, we have 20-30 years to reduce GHG by the same percentage. This GHG amount is greater than that produced by all of the cars on the road and would likely be unachievable if all electrical power production in California is stopped. Although a lofty reduction goal, China is now completing two 1000 MW coal plants PER WEEK and has passed the US in total GSG production. They are

also building nuclear plants.

During a question and answer period we learned the following:

\*California population now favors the use of nuclear power, but that the legislators lag behind. This explains why five bills by DeVore in the past three years have failed to be enacted.

\*The US has a greater number of nuclear plants 24 applications and 40 total in the pipeline. However the US faces some challenges. We abandoned the U.S. nuclear power industry production and design capabilities that led the world in the 60's and 70's. Most of the companies that used to supply nuclear industry parts are now foreign owned by the French and Japanese.

\*Inappropriate fear drives up costs and makes nuclear more expensive, not reality. Safety and security of a current facility is now better than old technology. which was also safely designed. The dome at San Onofre, for instance, cannot be penetrated by a 747 flying directly into it because it is over four feet thick and reinforced with steel tension bands that increase it's strength significantly against impact of any force. Security guards can protect areas as necessary based on Chuck's experience as a US Army security officer. The reactor core cannot be just melted down to create a bomb. The reactor core is designed to fail safe.

\*When the infamous Chernobyl failed in Russia it caused only about 50 deaths. Most of the illnesses and deaths were initial fire fighters. The rest were avoidable, due to secrecy by the Russian Bureaucracy. They did not fully inform their people about the risks of eating contaminated food that caused thyroid cancer and similar diseases. Also, the reactor was not housed in a properly designed Containment facility.

\*New reactor design technologies also don't require enormous amounts of water for cooling at selected sites. Power generated can actually be used to clean up locally available contaminated ground water with proper cooling tower designs.

\*There are ways to initiate the new build process. A group could spend \$5-10 million to prepare a preliminary site approval permit package and then sue to overturn the existing California law. There are some Tribal land groups looking into this.

\* A nuclear power plant takes much less land than a solar farm and provides much greater power capacity. It can act as an economic engine by offering low cost power to manufacturers. Also design life of the plants can exceed 60 years.

In summary: nuclear makes sense because it can be done safely with less environmental impacts, takes up less space, costs less over the life cycle of the process, and provides U.S. energy independence.

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**Chuck DeVore** has an impressive biography that provides an exceptional technical, financial, and broad political perspective on the issue of nuclear energy. He worked in the aerospace industry for 13 years including vice president of research prior to his continued service in the California State Assembly since 2004. Chuck is the Vice Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Revenue and Taxation and serves on the Veterans Affairs Committee, and the Joint Legislative Audit Committee.

In 2008, he authored a scholarly piece entitled, "[Relative Risk: Global Warming and Imported Fossil Fuels vs. Nuclear Power](#)", for the UC Berkeley School of Law's inaugural edition of Ecology Law Currents. Two related presentation documents can be found at:

<http://elq.typepad.com/currents/2008/04/currents35-05-devore-2008-0411.html>

and

<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/8058451/Nuclear-Power-and-Greenhouse-Gas-Emmissions>".

Chuck also served as a Reagan White House appointee as Special Assistant for Foreign Affairs where his duties included working with Congress to advance foreign and military policy where he enriched his knowledge of nuclear energy policy.

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## Valley VOTE Committee Reports and Announcements

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### What is Valley VOTE's Mission?

## Joe Vitti

The **VOTE** in **Valley VOTE**'s name stands for **V**oters **O**rganized **T**oward **E**mpowerment. It has been **7 years** since the Valley cityhood campaign and there are still many, including some City Council members, who believe that Valley VOTE's agenda is still focussed on secession. It should be clear by the positions and actions taken by the Valley VOTE Board and it's members since **2003** that this is simply not true. As it states in our Mission Statement we are *"committed to exploring and fostering the implementation of programs that empower the people of the San Fernando Valley and the City of Los Angeles. We are focused on improving local governance, education and public participation on policy matters."*

If you visit the **Press Release Page** on the Valley VOTE web site, [www.valleyvote.org](http://www.valleyvote.org), you will find **twenty-eight (28)** numerous positions on key issues Valley VOTE has supported over the last 7 years that are consistent with our Mission Statement. In many instances the timing of our reports were years before the implementation of the subject programs being considered. In other Press Releases, months before the voting by the City Council on various issues, or the public on ballot measures.

Here are a few examples:

**City Business Tax reforms** were supported in Press Releases issued on, March 8, 2004, May 5, 2004, August 16, 2005 and July 17, 2006. **Endorsement of the LA DWP MOU** with Neighborhood Councils was issued on April 5, 2005; the **RENEW L.A. Plan** on October 18, 2005; and **opposition to the Las Lomas Project** on Nov. 17, 2007. We also released support arguments for the **ordinance limiting "Mansionization"** on August 13, 2007; **State Proposition 11-Redistricting** -, on August 20, 2008; and **Historical Monument Status for Griffith Park** on Nov. 13, 2008. We strongly **opposed City Measure B** on February 17, 2009; and endorsed a **Rate Payer Advocate** for the LA DWP on Sept. 9, 2009.

Valley VOTE's Monthly Reports and Monthly Agenda's can also be found on our web site. They are very informative and help satisfy the obligation referred to in our Mission Statement of improving *"education and public participation on policy matters."*

I hope this helps clear up any misunderstanding some may have about Valley VOTE's Mission.

## NBC Universal's Evolution Plan Vic Viereck

At NBC Universal the Vision Plan is evolving into the Evolution Plan. With a desire to keep and create high-paying entertainment jobs in Los Angeles, NBC Universal has a blueprint for its 391-acre Universal City property. The Evolution Plan is for Universal's property on the East side of Lankershim Boulevard. While Universal wants to enhance its role as the world's largest working studio, it also wants to change the way we live, work and travel by bringing diverse housing options into the center of the entertainment industry and connecting them to transit.

Universal expects that its plan would generate \$2 billion in new economic activity annually throughout LA County, 12,000 new ongoing full and part-time jobs in the city and county, 31,000 new jobs during the construction period, and \$26 million in new annual tax revenue for the city and county. Besides upgrading production facilities to cutting-edge, and revitalizing the studio tour, Universal plans on improving transit in the area, and creating 2,900 lofts, town homes, apartments, and condominiums.

## LAWA Report Denny Schneider

Bradley West Project at LAX which will rebuild Tom Bradley International Terminal (TBIT) about 130 feet further west, had about \$1 billion in bonds approved today. This project will add new flex gates on the back that are large enough to handle the newer, larger aircraft Airbus A380 by 2012 and the core building increase by 2015. Denny Schneider, President of ARSAC, told BOAC today, "We support the project because we need to stop apologizing for poor customer service to our tourists, however additional things could/should be done to make it even better. LAWA should improve the curbside frontage, add bomb glass for security, and add even more concessions to accommodate friends bringing travelers to LAX. We still disagree with the EIR approval process, to meet the aggressive schedule promised to the City Council we will not act. "

Also approved was an amendment to the new Crossfield Taxiway project for about \$26 million.

The Central Utilities Plan Project to increase power and heating/cooling capacity to current and anticipated needs continues along with many additional maintenance and refurbishment projects needed all over LAX. We

anxiously await the Capital improvement projects list, but we understand that includes the urgently needed repairs to the Central Terminal upper roadway.

Regionalization of airport transportation will be helped by a new plan to involve Disney with efforts to improve Orange County use of LA/Ontario Airport. See [www.regionalsolution.org](http://www.regionalsolution.org) or write [Denny@WeLiveFree.com](mailto:Denny@WeLiveFree.com).

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### **DWP Update Jack Humphreville**

Jack Humphreville reported on the need for a ratepayer's advocate to oversee the Department of Water and Power. Jack noted that the DWP has been placing political appointees in key jobs for which they are not qualified, like in the purchasing department. DWP is also hiring a number of unqualified city workers who might otherwise have been furloughed or laid off. DWP performs some services for the city at below cost and also gives substantial money to the general fund.

An independent advocate is needed. The most important issue is how that advocate is chosen. Jack suggested several entities participate in the selection; 1) neighborhood councils (watching residential costs), 2) chambers of commerce (since businesses pay about 65% of revenue), and 3) multifamily representative (owners, dwellers).

The position should be a paid one rather than voluntary since DWP is a \$20 billion organization and much is at stake. The advocate should be supported by adequate staff to review operations, costs and fees. Additionally, there should be some enforcement mechanism to resolve issues uncovered by the advocate. He is not sure when a City Council vote to create one will come.

Joe Vitti pointed out that the five DWP Commissioners are part-time volunteers who are expected to also staff nine committees and four ad hoc committees according to the LA DWP web site. It just does not seem possible for them to do to do a complete and thorough job understanding the scope of their responsibility.

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### **Transportation Report Bart Reed**

Bart Reed, Executive Director of the Transit Coalition, distributed their monthly newsletters. The Expo is delayed because DWP didn't remove power lines at LaBrea or LaCienega. Finally the MTA contractor did the engineering and had it done. A complimentary problem occurred with the Orange Line due to recycled water lines and recently due to power lines around Warner Center near Lassen.

Bart reported that the rail cars being procured are about 36,000 pounds over specification and behind delivery schedule. The City will be bearing significant cost for the additional electricity to run them for the next fifty years plus some bridges may need additional structural support. Resolution of the problem will be addressed in the near future.

Los-San Corridor has one of the highest riderships in the nation; the recent budget cuts moved money to pay for high speed rail instead of SF Valley projects. Bus transit money was cut as well, but until replaced per a court directive they are using Prop R monies.

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### **NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of Valley VOTE will be held on Monday, Nov. 16, 2009 at Galpin Ford, 2nd Floor meeting room, 15555 Roscoe Blvd. at the 405 Freeway in North Hills. L.A. City Controller **Wendy Greuel** will be our featured speaker

### **Valley VOTE Mission Statement**

Valley VOTE, a diverse coalition of San Fernando Valley residents, business people, educators, community activists, and organizations, is committed to exploring and fostering the implementation of programs that empower the people of the San Fernando Valley and the City of Los Angeles, to improve local governance, education and public participation on policy matters.

*Please forward this Email to interested individuals and organizations. If you would like to be removed from our distribution list please send an Email to [javittisr@cs.com](mailto:javittisr@cs.com)*