

League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties
P. O. Box 765
Richland, WA 99352

December 3, 2007

Board of Commissioners
Benton County Courthouse
620 Market
Prosser, WA 99350

Board of Commissioners:

The League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties has completed a one-year study of whether the County seat should remain in Prosser or be moved to Kennewick.

In order to promote efficient government, county officials and their staff not only need to carry out their work at the County seat, but it is imperative that they have adequate space to provide services in the center of population.

Though we are not legal experts, we have concluded as a result of our study, that there are legal constraints associated with further expansion of county services and facilities outside of the County seat. In addition, it is neither practical nor cost-efficient to build new courtrooms in Prosser when, in fact, a Superior court case has not been heard there for the past 25 years.

We have identified two pathways that would correct the legal constraints. One is to move the County seat to Kennewick, which takes approval by the voters; the other is to change applicable state law, which would take concerted effort by elected officials across the state.

We request the Board of Commissioners address these issues prior to committing tax dollars for further construction of county facilities in either location.

If you find factual errors in this document please notify us in a timely manner, as we are planning to distribute our study to the public by the end of the year.

Thank you,

Judy Golberg
Chair, Benton County Study Committee