

CITIZENS' ELECTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER 2.2



Quarterly Newsletter

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IT'S BEEN A BUSY YEAR

We're headed down the final stretch – four (4) elections down, only one (1) to go! This has been the busiest year in a very long time and now we're headed into the general election in which a new president/vice-president will be elected. Very large voter turnout is predicted and we're prepared to handle it. Our office is fully staffed and ready to take on the challenge.

The changes to precincts resulting from the move to district only voting (and a few minor cleanups suggested by my office) will be presented to the County Council at a public hearing (October 11) to take effect January 1, 2017.

DROP BOX USAGE UP

With 15 boxes in place for the past Primary, the numbers using the boxes was at an all-time high – 65%

ANNUAL CEAC DECEMBER MEETING – In Person

The one meeting a year we currently hold in person is scheduled for December 15, 2016, 2:00 p.m. in the 5th floor conference room, #514. If you have topics you'd like to hear about, please let me know. You can email me at dadelste@co.whatcom.wa.us Or phone: (360) 778-5105

UPDATE ON TECHNOLOGY

As has been previously reported, the State of Washington is currently in the process of collecting information aimed at selecting a state-wide vendor who will provide the next voter registration database. They haven't specified the funding source yet but are hopeful the state will fund it. They are indicating that they are going to leave it to individual counties to determine what they will do for replacement of counting systems so we are laying some groundwork (discussing funding at a local level) for replacement of our aging counting equipment. You can be certain when we get to a stage of looking at systems, we'll plan to set up active meetings with members of the CEAC Committee to get your input. There are a few systems, mainly upgrades by previous vendors, currently awaiting federal certification. We will keep you posted.

UPDATE ON CYBER SECURITY

We have received several bulletins from the Secretary of State's office with updates on concerns being expressed in some areas about outside data attacks during the upcoming November election. Department of Homeland Security held a forum and Secretary Wyman participated outlining what a great position the State of Washington is in for preventing possible security attacks. Many of the voting devices being shown are not anything like what our State uses. Our system in Whatcom County does not operate on a system that would allow outside access to get to the important data information we have. One of the state supervisors at the Election Division, Stuart Holmes, was recently quoted in a newspaper article, "voter rolls are networked but not publicly. We've got a central database that's not available to the public," he explained. To access it, a user has to be at a computer on a State of Washington IP address. Visitors to websites that allow them to check their voter registration status are actually viewing a nightly copy of the voter rolls.

The counting results cannot be influenced by outside sources either. We only upload the total numbers at the end of the election and during our county counting process there is no online access to the results at all. Other devices being shown are not used in the State of Washington but are an online voting machine at a poll site. This is not the type of equipment we use. We utilize paper based systems, including voter verifiable paper audit trails. We have independent testing and pre-and post-election audits. We also have physical security of tabulation equipment.

We also work proactively and closely with IT and security experts to routinely review, identify and correct any vulnerabilities.



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Now is a good time to talk with your local legislators about topics that interest you. Our organizations that we cooperate with (Washington State Association of County Auditors and Washington Association of County Officials) are in the process of developing their legislative agendas. When January comes, the full legislative process will kick into full swing. With potential new legislators and state officials being elected this November, the names may change a bit but many of the same legislative initiatives will be on the docket. The Auditors don't have any specifically endorsed legislative pieces targeting Elections this year. Several returning items are expected to be again presented. These include: expanding registration deadlines, both in time for in-state residents and for 16 and 17-year olds, automatic voter registration like Oregon (one "opts out" if they do not want to be registered), and propose having the State pay for its share of election costs on the years they have candidates on the ballot.

A FLASH FROM THE PAST

"We have in mind a woman who takes a keen interest in public affairs, but admitted reluctantly that she might not vote in November.

"This is what she said: 'I want to vote more than ever, but I know that when Election Day comes around, I'll find myself putting it off simply because I can't face the ordeal. Walking through that maze of party hacks, waiting in line in that cold garage, is too embarrassing.'

"To the average male, for whom politics, stale cigar smoke, and rooms littered with sample ballots are inextricably mingled, this lady may appear unduly squeamish. But it does seem absurd to put on protracted and expensive 'get out the vote' campaigns if sensitive people are kept from the polls because they can't endure the mess. In many cities polling places are located in garages, firehouses, warehouses, basements, barbershops, grocery stores or any old place which a faithful party hack wants to rent to the city for the purpose. Thousands – particularly the women – are not going to vote as long as polling places are set up in such depressing surroundings.

"Unlike most problems, this one has a simple solution: Transfer polling places to the American schools, as has been done already in many communities. Each school can easily handle two to five election districts. Make Election Day a school holiday. This would make voting a dignified, important and pleasant experience, and might easily increase the number of those who participate in elections by convincing them that, physically, at least, politics need not be a 'dirty game.'

The Saturday Evening Post, 7/17/54 *Isn't "Vote By Mail" much more dignified?*