



ELECTION REFLECTION

Johnson County Election Office

Winter 2007 - 2008

Issue No. 7



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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From the Election Commissioner - Brian D. Newby

Imagine if the people behind the holiday lighting at the Country Club Plaza only worked on Thanksgiving Day.

They would begin their busy day before the sun rose, racing through the streets lifting ladders and hanging lights, testing the lights, installing backup power units, setting up the stage, arranging for entertainment, selecting the person to throw the switch, and calling in crowd-control personnel for the big moment that evening when the lights turn on.

It couldn't be done, of course.

Months of planning go into that one-day event. There's plenty of heaving lifting needed to prepare for 200,000 visitors. The entire day is rehearsed and planned to avoid any operational surprise.

And so it goes, similarly, with elections.

We are working diligently in preparation for the biggest election to hit the stage, the 2008 Presidential, and its estimated 300,000 Johnson County voters. Along the way, we're conducting other elections at an unprecedented pace.

In fact, I'm often asked what we do at the office when there isn't an election. My answer is that I don't know because I haven't yet experienced such a day. I've never worked a day at the Election Office where we didn't have an active election.

As we prepare for the January 29th Overland Park mail ballot election, we are working on our 19th election since I came here 3 years ago. By the time we hit November, we will be on election number 23. The county has never experienced that many elections in such a short period.

What that means is that every day when we come to the election office, we have an active, live election.

For those who joined the office before me, the streak goes back another year, and with the elections planned for 2008 and 2009, many of our staff members will go an amazing 5½ consecutive years in election mode, coming to work each morning with the deadline of an active election.

You have to go back to a time when gasoline costs less than \$2 per gallon and the Kansas City Royals had a winning baseball season to find the last time our staff had a break in the action.

And, the elections aren't just more frequent. They are bigger.

Overland Park's mail ballot election is the largest ever in the county with 120,000 ballots being mailed. It breaks the largest mail ballot election record at the office by surpassing the Olathe School District's 81,000-ballot election, which was conducted just three months earlier.

The 19 elections over the last three years include the largest turnout ever for a spring election (2005), the largest turnout for a gubernatorial election (2006), the first countywide special election in nearly 40 years (2005), and the most paper ballots mailed in a calendar year--actually a milestone that has been reached three times (in 2005, then in 2007, and, now, in 2008).

As an election worker at the polls, you have been on this ride with us to help ensure that our election events are remembered as they should be—only by the outcomes. All of us behind the scenes work very hard to simply serve as the crew behind the event. It's a great election day when we aren't even noticed.

Similarly, when the Plaza lights up on Thanksgiving Night, the celebration is for love and fellowship. No one gives a second thought at that moment to those who toiled to hang or test the lights. The lights are shining, and that's all that matters.

On November 4, our country will celebrate the fundamental right of all Americans—to freely choose our governing leaders. In Johnson County, the lights of democracy will burn brightly that day, and your efforts will be the behind-the-scenes work for this celebration of freedom.

Those lights are powered by the gifts of hard work and dedication you bring to the county. To all of you, I thank you for your energy and commitment to let all Johnson Countians celebrate democracy in 2008.

Please Mark Your 2008 Calendars now!

Election Dates

February 26, 2008 -
Spring Primary Election
(if needed)

April 1, 2008 -
Spring General Election
(Leawood, Mission, Prairie Village,
Shawnee, Westwood)

August 5, 2008 -
Fall Primary Election
(Full County)

November 4, 2008 -
Fall General Election
(Full County)



**Please Complete and Return
2008 Availability Form
by December 31st**



**Spring Training
Information and Dates,
page 2**

★ Three Ways to Vote in Johnson County

- Option 1 -**
Advance Vote in Person
- Option 2 -**
Advance Vote by Mail
- Option 3 -**
Vote on Election Day at your Polling Place
- Election Day Polling Places can change with every election.**

ExpressPolls New Training Opportunity



★ New "Encoders" Have Arrived

What is only slightly larger than a bread box, lighter than a sack of potatoes, and able to encode voter cards for every voter in your polling place?

Answer: an **ExpressPoll**.

The aging heavy, black encoder machines have been replaced with the new ExpressPolls which will be implemented in the spring 2008 elections.

Don't worry – there will be lots of training. Initially, they will be used to encode voter cards only, but the long-range goal is to use them to check in voters as well.

Please check the back of your 2008 Availability Form for Part-Time Support Staff opportunities

Election Workers

Accurate and Effective Election Worker Training

Kansas Senate Bill 479, passed in 2004, states:

County Election Officers are required to provide instruction to election board judges and clerks before each election.

Election Worker Training is required and more uniform across Kansas than ever before.

Election Workers today have more duties and more complexity in those duties. Many of these changes were brought about by the Help America Vote Act passed by Congress.

Policy and procedure requirements make it necessary to train Election Workers before each election.

Now is the time to purchase that new alarm clock. 2008 will be busy! Your fellow board workers need you ready and on time.



Anticipate '08

Supervising Buddy Program

We are always appreciative of the individuals who take on the added responsibilities of Supervising Judge. As we approach the elections of 2008, we are in definite need of additional Supervising Judges. We are blessed with many capable election workers who qualify to supervise a polling location. We just need you to step up and offer to serve in this capacity.

In the April election, we will embark on a new training concept, "Supervising Buddy" Program. We will assign a Supervising Judge Trainee to every Supervising Judge in April. For the Fall Elections, the Supervising Judge Trainees will be assigned to supervise their own voting location.

Please seriously consider participating in this new program...WE NEED YOU!!!!

Simply indicate your desire to 'step up' by circling **YES** on the 'Election Worker Availability Questionnaire' and become a member of the elite Supervising Judge category of dedicated election workers for Johnson County, Kansas.

Training Dates – 2008

February 26, 2008 Primary Election:

(Primary if needed)

Election Worker Training:

Election Office:

- February 13th or 14th, 9 a.m. - Noon
- February 15th, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Mandatory Supervising Judge Meetings:

Sunset Building:

- February 23rd or 24th, 9 a.m.

April 1, 2008 General Election:

Election Worker Training:

Overland Park Church of Christ:

- March 8th, 9 a.m.-Noon - Refresher
- ##### Election Office:
- March 18th, 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
 - March 20th, 9 a.m. - Noon

Mandatory Supervising Judge Meetings:

Sunset Building:

- March 29th or 30th, 9 a.m.

Practice Makes Perfect sessions:

JoCo Library - Main Branch:

- March 27th - 29th, 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

All assigned election workers will be notified of exact dates, times and locations as finalized.

On-Line Training:

May not be available in 2008 because of the need for everyone to have hands-on training with the new ExpressPolls.

Election Worker Reminders - Check List -

- Inform Election Office of changes in availability
- Inform Election Office of address or phone number changes
- Training is required before every election
- Be on time to your Polling Place
- Be available for the entire Election Day
- Work together to set up and tear down the Polling Place
- Assist the Supervising Judge as directed
- Happily greet and assist voters
- Bring food, drink and medications
- Business casual attire is appropriate, with comfortable shoes
- No smoking is allowed at any Polling Place
- Insure outside signage is posted properly
- Call the Election Office with any questions



Fund Raiser Share a Day's Pay

Are you a member of an organization that is looking for a great way to raise funds?

Our Adopt-A-Polling Place Program or **Share a Day's Pay** is an excellent solution! Members of the organization sign up to work the polls on Election Day. They then donate their earnings directly to their favorite charity or fund-raising campaign.

This is a win-win situation as it brings us new Election Workers and makes good money for "the cause." This program can benefit ANY organization or group that wishes to strengthen its financial status for future events or wishes to raise funds to pay off existing debts:

Bridge Clubs, Scouts, School Groups, Church Groups, Sodalities, Fraternities/Sororities, Sports Clubs, Music Groups/Choirs, PTA's, and many more.

We will be happy to send you all the information you need to answer your questions and get your group started. Call today!! Our office phone number is 913-782-3441.

Thank you - Support Staff

There are 16 full-time staff members at the Election Office. We are supported by wonderful "part-time" support staff. These ladies and gentlemen work in a variety of areas. We could not succeed without them. These staff members are dedicated, dependable, flexible, reliable, enthusiastic, cooperative, and positive. They always rise to the challenges facing the Election Office.

They take on various jobs during the peak times:

- Answering phone calls
- Cleaning and reloading polling place suitcases
- Data entering voter registration and advance ballot applications
- Scanning registration applications and candidate documents
- Preparing and stuffing ballots for advance voting by mail
- Staffing advance voting locations
- Opening, verifying and scanning voted ballots
- Calling election workers for work and for training
- Assisting with training sessions
- Runners on Election Day
- Machine diagnostic and setup crew
- Field Supervisors
- Supply return teams on Election Night
- Assisting equipment delivery and pickup teams
- Other duties as assigned

There are up to 100 part time staff employees with us at any one point during our peak times of elections. This support staff works with us during these times - 8 days, 8 weeks or 8 months. They are flexible and go with the flow. There are so many to name that we do not want to take a chance and forget anyone. You all make the job here easier. You take away a lot of our job stress.

We **thank you** for your dedication and commitment to the electoral process. We are very fortunate to have so many knowledgeable, skilled individuals that continue to give service to Johnson County.

Recruitment Clubs

Passing the Torch

We need our existing group of Election Workers to consider the future. Please ask your family members to become involved in the tradition of working the elections, to protect democracy in action.

Sign up your adult children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Please join our **Torch Club** and "Pass the Torch" to the next generation. This does NOT mean you have to retire!!! It is simply a recruiting program to get more people involved. Keep the torch lit!

Star Catchers

This program is a referral recruitment tool to sign on new Election Workers from leads that you give us. We have had a great response. Thank you, keep up the good work and refer your friends and neighbors.

Presidential 2008 Planning

We are planning for the 2008 Presidential Election.

Projections:

Registered Voters - 360,000

Expected Turnout -

Advance - 150,000 Election Day - 150,000

Advance Vote Locations - 4

Election Day Voting Locations - 275 +

Election Office Staff - 16 Election Workers - 1800 +

Temp EO Staff - 100 + Field Supervisors - 20 +

Paper Ballots Printed - 300,000 Ballot Styles - 1300 +

Voting Machines - 1881 ExpressPolls - 300

Election Day Phone Calls - 8-10,000

Election Day Web hits - 60,000 +

We need you.

Complete the 2008 Availability Form and mail ASAP...

Partner in Democracy

The Partners in Democracy Program is a public-private partnership between businesses and the Johnson County Election Office. Businesses release their employees to serve at the polls on Election Day. **And/Or** Businesses donate space within their facility to serve as a polling place for neighboring residents.

Interested? Call us for more information.

Reaching Out...

Informing voters of their polling place has become a pre-election event for every election.

In 2006 the Election Office began the practice of mailing an informational card to voters before every election. The card gives the voter the three options for voting.

They can:

#1 - Advance Vote In Person

#2 - Advance Vote By Mail

#3 - Vote on Election Day only at the assigned location listed on the **front** of the card

Voters may watch the mail for their postcards, check on-line (www.jocoelection.org, click on "Voter Lookup") or call us (782-3441) for their Election Day Voting locations.

Newest Staff Members - Welcome!

Alison Collins and Melanie Shelton



Alison Collins joined our staff May 7, 2007. She transferred from the Johnson County District Attorney's office. Alison is in charge of Accounts Payable, publications and is part of the results tabulations team.

Melanie Shelton then joined us June 4, 2007. She is a member of the Textcaster team, registration group, disaster plan development, replies to Web mail, assists with the election timeline and coordinates suitcase supplies.

Both ladies arrived here in time to be on board for the Feed the Need Project and joined right in with the fun. They are both getting acclimated to the election atmosphere as we begin gearing up for 2008. Right now they think it is very calm and quiet around here...the surprise awaits.



Election Office Fun - Feed the Need



The Election Office joined 35 county offices on June 21st thru July 6th to help stock 10 local food pantries and to "Feed the Need." There is always room in life to help others. We dunked the county chair of the event, our Brian Newby, laughed and

had fun, while taking part in a very worthwhile program for Johnson County. The county employees raised **293,801.70 pounds or 146.9 tons of food** for the county pantries. County Commissioner Chair Annabeth Surbaugh credited Brian and his two main assistants, Jennifer and Alison (EO staff) for a successful campaign along with the commitment and support of county employees willing to help others. The county has participated in the "Feed the Need" program since 1987. This is a regional effort coordinated by the Mid-America Regional Council, the Mid-America Assistance Coalition, and Harvesters Community Food Network.

What are you doing for others?

If you are community service minded and want to make a difference in the lives of others, check out the web site for the Johnson County Volunteer Center for a multitude of volunteer opportunities. Step up and get involved.



www.vcjc.org or call - 913-341-1792



Make a Difference...

Live your life so that your children can tell their children that you not only stood for something wonderful - you acted on it.

Dan Zadra

Election Workers are public minded citizens who train for 3 hours then work a 14 hour day to make the voting process work.

Thank you...

"Anticipate '08"



Changes are definitely in store for 2008 regarding Polling Places in Johnson County!

There are numerous locations that are no longer available to us. We have pioneered an exhaustive campaign to recruit new locations in an attempt to maintain the high level of service our voters have grown to expect.

We will soon be launching an educational campaign titled "Anticipate '08" to inform the voters of the changes ahead. It is imperative that all registered voters in Johnson County realize that polling places can, and often do, change with every election.

We must emphasize the importance of verifying your polling location for each election before heading out the door. It is no longer safe to assume that you will be voting at the same location you were assigned to in the previous election. Since 2006, we have been sending an Election Day Information Card to every registered voter two weeks prior to every election.

Help us to spread the word by telling your relatives, friends and neighbors to "Anticipate '08" and check first in order to reduce frustrations on Election Day(s).

Priorities and Commitments



You are Needed ...

The information you provide in the yearly 'Availability Form' is utilized to create the proper balance for each location when assigning Election Workers to polling places.

We ask that if you make a commitment to work on an Election Day, it will take priority when other tempting opportunities arise. Please be thoughtful of your fellow board workers and cancel **only** if absolutely necessary.

We need each of you to assist the several hundred voters in your assigned polling location on Election Days.

Please mark your calendars now!

Complete and Return

by December 31st...

2008 Availability Form

We thank each of you for your dedication and reliability..