

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EL DORADO COUNTY ELECTION INFORMATION

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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I have been getting a lot of phone calls about what is going on with elections in El Dorado County. Do we have to provide our driver's license number to register to vote? Will El Dorado County be voting by all-mail ballot in the June election? What about those new voting machines?

I would like to take this opportunity to begin answering some of those questions. There is a lot happening in elections this year. Beginning on January 1, 2006, all persons registering or re-registering to vote have had to provide their driver's license or state ID number on their voter registration form. If they did not have a driver's license or state ID, they have been required to provide the last four digits of their social security number. When we receive a voter registration form, if this requirement is not met, we have been required to contact the voter to obtain the information or verify that they have neither of these numbers. Also, beginning on January 1, 2006, the State of California began using a **statewide voter database**. All of our voter registration data is being transmitted to the state daily and all drivers' license/state id numbers must be validated through DMV before they will be loaded into the statewide database. If the information given by the voter does not match with what DMV has for that voter, we must also contact the voter to verify the information. Voters will not be on the index list at the polls unless and until their voter registration has been validated by the state. Voters not on the index at the polls will be allowed to vote a provisional ballot which will only be counted if their registration data can be validated. In addition, the Help America Vote Act of 2002 required us to change to a new voting system. Our old punch card system no longer meets Federal requirements. A volunteer committee of voters from all different parts of the county and all walks of life, including two disabled persons, spent nearly 5 months reading through bid documents from 4 different voting system vendors, interviewing vendors and participating in hands on testing of each voting system. They each deserve a thank you from all of us for their time and dedication to this choice. The main reasoning was to maintain a paper ballot system, while utilizing an electronic touch screen machine to meet the HAVA requirements for disabled persons.

While we will not be voting by all-mail, we will have 16 mail ballot precincts for the June election. This gives us a total of 122 precincts with 16 being all mail in ballots only. In addition, 38% of our voters are already permanent absentee voters. We will be mailing absentee ballots out to all permanent absentee voters and mail ballot precinct voters beginning on May 8th.

The message I want to convey to El Dorado County voters is this. We will be using a paper ballot voting system both at the polls and for absentee voters. Each polling location will have an optical scan device for reading the paper ballot you will mark by filling in the ovals on your ballot, then inserting that ballot into the optical scanner. We will be placing one touch screen machine in every polling location for use by disabled voters, which will comply with federal law. The touch screen equipment that we have purchased includes a voter verifiable paper audit trail. That paper audit trail created on the touch screen will be used in the case of a recount. We have created a very informative brochure that will be mailed to each registered voter household that will explain our new voting system. We are excited about introducing a new voting system to our county and hope that all voters will enjoy participating in the new voting method.

In addition, we are in the process of remodeling our election headquarters so that the area will be more open and transparent for viewers to watch as the election process is underway. We hope you stop by for an opportunity to see us at work.

If you have questions about any of the items I have mentioned above, please feel free to call me or any member of my staff at 530-621-7480.