

Democracy in ACTION

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BECOME A DEPUTY REGISTRAR

A Deputy Registrar is a registered voter who has been trained by an Election Official to assist people with the voter registration process, and is able to conduct voter registration drives.

In 2008, Lisa Wise, Douglas County's Chief Deputy Election Commissioner, trained over 350 registered voters in becoming Deputy Registrars.

To become a Deputy Registrar, you must:

- Be a Nebraska registered voter,
- Attend a training session conducted by an Election Official, and
- Receive a certificate verifying completion of training, indicating he or she is qualified as a Deputy Registrar.

The training dates are available on the Douglas County Election Commission website at www.votedouglascounty.com.

For more information on becoming a Deputy Registrar or to sign up for a training class, please contact the Douglas County Election Commission at (402) 444-VOTE (8683).



READY FOR THE GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS?

The Election Commission is getting ready for the upcoming Statewide Gubernatorial Elections. The Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, May 11, 2010 and the General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 2, 2010.

Approximately 2,000 registered voters will be recruited and trained to help administer the election at over 260 polling places and the Election Commission office.

EARLY VOTING

Voters can submit their requests for early voting ballots by either downloading and completing the *Early Voting Ballot Application* from our website (www.votedouglascounty.com) or by submitting a written request that includes:

- Name of Election;
- Voter's first and last name;
- Voter's registered home address with city, state, and zip code;
- Address to send the ballot (if different from home address);
- Voter's date of birth;
- A phone number and/or an email address;
- Voter's party affiliation; and
- Voter's signature.

All requests must be delivered, mailed, or faxed to the Douglas County Election Commission. The mailing address is 225 North 115th Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68154. The fax number is (402) 444-4181. All requests must be received by 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 5, 2010. Voters may also start voting early in person at the Election Commission on Monday, April 5, 2010.

The number of voters participating in Early Voting has been increasing over the last several years. For example, in 2004, 29,240 voters voted early, both in person and by mail. In 2008, more than 60,000 registered voters voted early, both in person and by mail.

CANDIDATES GET INFORMED

Seventy-two offices are up for re-election this year. The elected offices range from school boards to Governor to U.S. House of Representatives.

The Douglas County Election Commission is inviting all candidates to attend an informational meeting on Monday, March 15, 2010 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Election Commission office.

Candidates and candidate representatives from local and federal offices will have the opportunity to ask questions.

"The meeting is a great opportunity to get questions answered. It's also a time for candidates from different offices to meet and share their stories," says Dave Phipps, Election Commissioner.

For more information, please visit our website at www.votedouglascounty.com. Incumbent candidates have until February 16, 2010 to file for office and non-incumbents until March 1, 2010.



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POLL WORKERS NEEDED

Poll workers serve an important role in the democratic process. The Douglas County Election Commission utilizes over 2,000 people on Election Day in over 354 precincts throughout the County and at the Election Commission office itself.

Douglas County is unique in the way it finds its poll workers. About 25 percent of all poll workers are volunteers, while the rest are “draftees,” who are required by Nebraska Law to serve four elections once they have been randomly selected.

In 2008, more than 4,500 poll workers were recruited and trained for the historical Statewide Presidential Elections. More than 2,500 were used during the General Election. However, we need more people not only for the upcoming Statewide Gubernatorial Elections, but for future elections. Poll workers:

- Receive a day off from work **WITH** pay from his or her employer,
- Have the potential to earn up to \$100.00 additional for Election Day,
- Meet members of their neighborhood, and
- Give back to the community.

Our poll workers work hard to answer the thousands of phone calls we get on Election Day, work at the polls, receive the ballots at the office, travel from polling place to polling place, and work at the office counting ballots. To become a poll worker or for more information, please contact Felisa Evans, Election Board Coordinator, at (402) 444-VOTE (8683).

Poll Workers receive a day off from work **WITH** pay from their employers and have the potential to earn up to \$100.00 additional for Election Day!



Commissioner's Corner...

A Message from Election Commissioner Dave Phipps



Dave Phipps
Election Commissioner

We're back. It's amazing just how much work it takes to put together a newsletter every couple of months. So much work, in fact, that we stopped doing it. But now we're going to start again...just not so often. We found that maybe a twice-a-year newsletter seemed to be a better idea, so we'll give that a try.

It's been a pretty hectic Election Commission lately. After finishing with the biggest election in Douglas County history (the 2008 Presidential General Election), we had to put together the City of Omaha Primary and General Elections.

Presidential elections are always the most difficult elections to administer because such a large number of voters come out, and they aren't always the most experienced voters to begin with. Many only vote every four years and aren't quite sure about the process. It's always a little more difficult and quite a bit more time-consuming, to help these voters, but our staff, as always, did a fantastic job. With nearly 230,000 voters casting a ballot in the election (73%), we broke records. It definitely kept us busy, but it was great to see so many people exercising their right to vote.

The City of Omaha elections were, by contrast, a bit of a sleeper. When you only see around 75,000 people vote, it seems that no

one is interested in the election. However, compared to previous elections, it was fairly typical. The problem for us, of course, is that whether we have one voter, or a hundred thousand voters, we still have to do the same amount of work. The polling places have to be found and supplied, the poll workers have to be recruited and trained, and the early voters have to be taken care of, regardless of the number of people who decide to come out for the election.

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We should have a fairly busy election year this year. With the Governor's race, all the state constitutional offices up for election, a U.S. House race, and all the other state and local races, there is plenty of excitement. But whatever happens, I know that the staff is ready to do what it takes to get the job done. I look forward to seeing you out there on Election Day.



ELECTION CALENDAR

2010 Statewide Gubernatorial Primary Election

February

1st - Deadline for new political party to submit petitions with the Secretary of State to qualify for primary election.

16th - Deadline for incumbents to file for office for primary.

March

1st - Deadline for non-incumbents to file for office for primary.

1st - Deadline for political subdivision to submit special issue for primary ballot.

1st - Deadline to withdraw filing for office for primary.

26th - Deadline to have Early Voting Ballots ready and sent to overseas and military voters with requests on file.

April

5th - First day for in-person early voting.

5th - First day Early Voting Ballots will be mailed to voters with requests on file.

23rd - Deadline for mailed voter registrations to be postmarked.

23rd - Last day to register at DMV, agencies, libraries, or with Deputy Registrars.

23rd - Deadline for voter registration form to be delivered to election office by someone other than person registering.

29th - Deadline for write-in candidate to file notarized affidavit and filing fee.

May

3rd - Deadline for in-person voter registration at Election Commission, 6:00 p.m.

5th - Deadline for requesting Early Voting Ballots to be mailed to a specific address, 4:00 p.m.

10th - Deadline for in-person early voting at Election Commissioner's office.

11th - Election Day. Polls are open from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. All Early Voting Ballots must be returned to Election Commission by 8:00 p.m.

ELECTION COMMISSION ATTENDS MEOC

Douglas County Election Commission employees recently attended the 2009 Midwest Election Officials Conference (MEOC) that was held December 6th - 9th in Overland Park, Kansas. Dave Phipps, Election Commissioner, and Lisa Wise, Chief Deputy Election Commissioner, accompanied four of their staff members to their first MEOC.

MEOC is an event that happens every four years. The conference is an opportunity for election officials from the region's four states, Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, and Missouri, to learn about emerging election administration issues, changes to federal and state laws regarding elections, and strategies to continue making elections successful. The four Secretaries of State, Secretary John Gale (Nebraska), Secretary Michael Mauro (Iowa), Secretary Ron Thornburgh (Kansas), and Secretary Robin Carnahan (Missouri) led a successful conference.

Although the region's first winter storm was in the forecast, MEOC drew nearly 300 election officials with a full-packed schedule that included various speakers, multiple vendors, and numerous opportunities to share ideas with one another.

"This conference gives you a chance to meet people, especially from your own state, who know what you go through during each election," said Phipps. "You can pass ideas to one another and find out what works for them that might be useful for you."

The three-day conference featured speakers, from motivational to election officials from Texas and Minnesota. Each and every one of the speakers offered ways to strengthen and preserve the integrity of every election. For example, Leslie Reynolds, with the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), spoke about which election-related legislative bills were pending and which have passed in the 111th Congress. She also provided more details about the Military and Overseas Voters Act, which was signed on October 29, 2009. Kern Walden, from Inclusions=Solutions, presented ways to make polling places more accessible for voters with disabilities and to ensure that each location is ADA compliant. Gary Poser, the Election Director for the State of Minnesota, shared his experience of what his office had to go through to recount the votes for the state's U.S. Senate race that was placed on the 2008 Presidential General Election ballot.

Throughout the conference, attendees shared with one another how elections are conducted in their county and how to educate voters about the election process. For example, some attendees learned that some states still have excuse only Absentee Voting and not Early Voting, which is available to all voters. Others learned that blogs and social networking tools, such as Facebook and Twitter, are great ways to educate and communicate more with voters.

"While the speakers and the sessions were remarkable, the information and ideas I gathered were invaluable," said Maria Ulanday, Public Relations Coordinator.



REDESIGNED WEBSITE, FACEBOOK, & TWITTER

With the new year here and the upcoming Statewide Gubernatorial Elections near, the Douglas County Election Commission is continuously finding ways to better serve its voters and candidates.

As a result of many suggestions and feedback received, the Election Commission website is in the process of receiving a face lift. The face lift will include a new layout, a new logo, more features, and much more information. The website is being redesigned and reorganized to ensure that election related information is easily accessible for all.

Dave Phipps, Election Commissioner, is excited and hopes voters and candidates will find it more useful. "Our website needed to be changed. Voters and candidates wanted more information, and that's what we are going to give them."

Phipps said many of the new features will be added to enhance and improve the election process for all. Some of the major features will include various demonstration and training videos,

request forms for products and services, a sign-up form to attend a Deputy Registrar Training Class or become a poll worker, and many more.

The current features will remain on the website, but with a new look. For example, voters will still be able to search for their polling place based on their address, see the list of political districts their address is within, and download the current county-wide election sample ballot, and the sample ballot for his or her address. As for candidates, the list of polling places will still be available and organized by political district.

Many new items are being added. Voters will have access to more information on the various types of elections held in the county, the process for starting petitions, how to request an Early Voting Ballot, how to register to vote, and more. Candidates will have access to more information on how to file for office, the qualifications for each elective office within the county, the filing forms, the campaign guidelines for Election Day, and more. Redesigning the Election Commission website isn't the only avenue the Election Commission is using to communicate with its voters and

candidates. The Douglas County Election Commission has joined the popular social networking websites, Twitter and Facebook!

As a follower on Twitter or as a fan on Facebook, you will receive the most up-to-date information regarding Early Voting, Voter Registration, and Election Day. For example, the Election Commission will post if there are long lines at the Election Commission office to register to vote or to vote early or post reminders of upcoming deadlines. Followers and fans will also have access to photos of what's happening at the Election Commission office during the election season. Become a follower or fan today!

"I personally use Twitter and know other government agencies that have Facebook. It's a great avenue to reach out and serve voters and candidates. Why not use it?" Phipps said.



Facebook: Search *Douglas County Election Commission*
Twitter: www.twitter.com/dcElections

The Douglas County Election Commission is continuously finding ways to better serve its voters and candidates.



Douglas County Election Commission
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