

**Help America Vote Act
Idaho State Planning Committee
Minutes, February 10, 2005**

Dr. James Weatherby called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the semi-annual meeting of the State Planning Committee. Dr. Weatherby began the meeting by having each of the participants introduce themselves to the group.

Jim Mairs, new to the group, introduced himself to the group as the HAVA Transition Coordinator, briefly explained his new position, and handed out his contact information. Jim gave an overview of his activities so far -- getting up to date on HAVA law, meeting with the clerks to ascertain their concerns and expectations, travel to look at voting equipment.

Other participants at the meeting included:

Tim Hurst, Chief Deputy of the Secretary of State's office

Dan English, Kootenai County Clerk

Rose Gehring, Idaho County Clerk

Dave Gipson, Caxton Printers

Jim Hansen, United Visions of Idaho

Dave Navarro, Ada County Clerk

Sharon Widner, Washington County Clerk

Emil Dryzayich, Computer Arts

Elinor Chehey, League of Women Voters of Idaho

Rex Sermon, Democratic Party

Barbara Roberts, Democratic Party

Ben Ysursa, Secretary of State

Susan Peterson, Latah County Clerk

Chris Rich, Ada County

Dean Pierose, Project Manager for the Statewide Voter Registration System

Copies of the June 24th meeting minutes were distributed. A minor change was noted for a misspelled participant's name. Eleanor Chehey

Jim Hansen moved to approve the minutes.

Seconded. No discussion offered. Vote unanimous to approve.

Tim Hurst presented a synopsis of the 2004 election results. He explained that the 2004 general election had record turnout, voter registration of 798,000. He directed the group to the copies of reports, provided in their packets that were survey results provided to the Election Assistance Commission. Tim briefly summarized the information contained in the reports, encouraged everyone to read the report in its entirety as they had time, and to call with any questions that may come up at a later time.

Tim noted that absentee ballots, both domestic and overseas, were at record numbers for this election. Drop off rates were discussed. Dan English asked if it wasn't 4 years ago that drop off rates were actually higher. Ben Ysursa confirmed that for the 2000 general election results for president, rates were indeed higher for drop off. Discussion followed of what comprised drop off, or residual, statistical numbers.

Tim Hurst explained that the higher numbers in Adams County were attributed by the Clerk to first time voters and voter error – in some cases it appeared that voters did not realize that George Bush and John Kerry were both candidates for the same office. Dan English reported that they had a number of overvotes for president that appeared to be related to a ballot layout issue. Ben Ysursa agreed that we need to strive for the cleanest and most "uncluttered" ballot layout possible, especially for presidential races, which include the presidential electors names on the ballot in addition to the president and vice-president candidates.

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Summary review of the State Plan.

Jim Mairs reported that while reading through the Plan, he has determined that all of the legislative requirements have been done. Yet to be accomplished is the voter registration system to come on line this year and the requirement that an accessible voting machine be available in every precinct.

Jim stated that accessible voting machines were his number one priority. He explained that he has heard the same concerns in most of his discussions with people: (1) what kind of a machine; (2) is the federal government ever going to give us certification guidelines; (3) are vendors going to be able to manufacture these machines and deliver them on time; (4) are we going to have enough time to train our people.

Jim explained that his priority is to make things happen quickly – to determine the need for certification and get equipment purchased in a timely manner to ensure that we do not get shortchanged for time on the back end of the process which will be training, training, training.

Barbara Roberts asked if any of the vendors on the certified list had machines that include the verifiable receipt. Tim Hurst indicated that Avante is the only currently certified vendor that provides receipts.

Barbara Roberts then asked who actually will make the decision about which machines will be purchased. Ben Ysursa said that he wants to give the counties a choice as to what machine they purchase. Ben also pointed out that at this time there is no DRE machine currently certified by the federal government.

Emil asked if a smaller list of choices (for the counties) wouldn't be more cost effective, both in terms of buying power and support costs.

Jim Hansen asked if there was a significant increase in absentee ballots and/or walk-in absentee voting and whether we should be concerned that resources for early voting stations are able to handle the increased numbers. Secretary Ysursa confirmed that absentee / early voting numbers are up and will probably further increase.

Jim Hansen asked if funds were available from the Democracy Fund to help with increased costs for absentee and early voting. Tim Hurst pointed out that money from that fund was dedicated to improving the process, not to increase voter turnout or voter participation.

Voter Outreach.

Jim Mairs gave a brief overview what was done for the Idaho Votes outreach campaign. What remains to be done is a public outreach campaign to educate voters on new voting equipment. It remains to be determined what form this campaign will take. Jim encouraged everyone to familiarize themselves with the IdahoVotes.gov web site.

Jim Hansen asked about outreach efforts being done for City elections. Tim Hurst noted that HAVA funds are only available for federal elections. They cannot be used to promote voter outreach specifically for a non-federal election.

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Grant Money.

Jim Mairs reported that HHS grant monies are available to provide and/or improve access to polling places. Further monies are to come in 2005. Jim will be putting together a "best practices" list for counties that will include innovative ways to make polling places accessible on election day.

Tim Hurst reported that only \$48,000 in reimbursements have been asked for against the 2003 \$100,000 allocation. An additional allocation of \$100,000 has been received for 2004. There will be another \$100,000 allocated for 2005. Therefore, approximately \$250,000 is available at this time, which can only be used for handicapped accessibility. It cannot be used to buy accessible voting devices. This is money that will revert, should it not be used.

Voter Registration.

Dean Pierose reported on the progress of the statewide voter registration system. A synopsis of the progress and the project schedule was handed out and discussed. First implementation is targeted for the week of March 14. Implementations will go through the week of May 16.

Conferences Attended.

Tim Hurst reported that he and Dan attended the Standards Board meeting. The Executive Committee was selected and by-laws were organized. Tim also attended the State Elections Directors meeting in January. He reported briefly on the EAC presentation given. Dan English reported that he attended the Election Center conference at the beginning of January.

Dr. Weatherby asked if there was any other business to bring before the Committee. There was none.

Dr. Weatherby declared the meeting adjourned.