

**HAVA State Planning Committee
Thursday, February 7, 2008**

The meeting was called to order by Jim Mairs. Those in attendance were Tim Hurst, Jim Mairs and Lisa Powers from the Secretary of State Office; Brian Kane from the Attorney General's Office, Barbara Roberts from the Democratic Party, Dan English from Kootenai County, Chris Rich from Ada County, Sharon Widner from Washington County, Tony Poinelli from the Association of Counties, Dave Gipson from Caxton Printers and Jim Hansen from United Vision for Idaho.

Minutes from the July 26, 2007 meeting were approved.

Review of HHS Grants

To date the State of Idaho has been granted \$500,000 and applied for another \$100,000 last July. The State has reimbursed \$217,367 to counties that have completed access improvements to polling places. There are 4 counties with grant approvals that have not sent in receipts for reimbursement yet. "Project Vote" falls under the HHS Grant Program. They are going to resubmit for funding. They will be training the disabled community as well as for Senior Citizens on the AutoMark. They may help with county testing of the AutoMarks and possibly working at the polls.

It was asked if HHS money could be used for AutoMark implementation. Tim Hurst said that training would be covered but not costs associated with delivery. He will look into it.

The Democracy Fund

Democracy fund status information was handed out. The total amount in the fund is \$6.7 million. \$5.8 million is allocated for the counties for new equipment. This money is allocated to each county according to population. It is available to them until it is spent.

Representative Loertscher has asked to have some of the money allocated for "Vote Centers" that allow people to vote outside of their own precinct. It has worked in Larimer County, Colorado, but there were many problems in Denver. An online poll book with secure internet access is required on Election Day throughout the county to keep people from voting in more than one place. Most counties would not be able to do this.

FY 2008 Appropriation

Congress has appropriated an additional \$5.7 million to help fund HAVA. Idaho needs approximately \$30,400, for a 5% match, to qualify for the funding. Mr. Hurst is checking with the EAC to see if the additional amounts the counties have contributed to the Democracy Fund will cover the match requirement, or if the state will need an additional appropriation. In that case the Secretary would meet with JFAC to determine if carry over money could be moved into the Democracy Fund to meet the match requirement.

The state plan will need to be amended to include an additional \$750,000 in matching funds. The funds can only be used for implementation of voting systems and the voter registration system. The HAVA planning committee will need to meet to revise the state plan and provide 30 days for public comment before adopting the plan. The revised plan would then be sent to the EAC who will publish it in the federal register for another 60 days before the state would receive the additional appropriation.

Mr. Hurst recommended using the funding for ongoing support of the state wide voter registration system. The voter registration system requires approximately \$500,000 a year for maintenance and support. Current funding will be depleted in May or June of 2010.

Please let Mr. Hurst know if you have comments or suggestions on the use of this funding. A plan will be drafted based on the committee's comments and presented to the public for input.

Preparations for the 2008 Elections

The entire ES&S Idaho team no longer works for ES&S. The company has been downsized by 10%. They are downsizing sales and emphasizing service. We have assurances they will pay close attention to Idaho due to the change in staff. Our representative is now Brian Hoffman.

The state may be able to enter all of the statewide candidates at one time into Unity Online instead of 44 times, once for each county. The current method is time consuming and caused multiple revisions during the last election.

We are still working with ES&S to contract with Caxtons for ballots. We like the service from Caxton and would like them to be able to do the entire state of Idaho, but they don't have the capability yet.

All ballot layout, coding and support will be coming out of ES&S Omaha. Hopefully this will make ballots and service more consistent across the state.

9 counties are making voting system changes this year. Ada, Cassia, Blaine, Madison, Kootenai and Latah are moving to the M650 central count optical scan tabulators and optical scan ballots for the primary election. Canyon will run a mock election at the fair this summer to practice on their M650s before the implementing the tabulator for the general election. Ada will be the only county using the full Unity software suite.

Teton and Lemhi counties will use M100 precinct count tabulators starting with the primary election. The M100 provides feedback for the voter. If the voter inserts a ballot with an over vote an alarm sounds and the voter has the opportunity to correct the ballot.

Legislative Update

H.B.158 is an election clean up bill that requires county commissioners to post notice of an election at least 45 days before the election. The bill allows a failed bond election to be rerun in 5 months, instead of 6, so it could be run again in the next major election. For example, if a bond issue failed in the primary election, it could be run again in the general election where more people vote instead of waiting until February when the voter turnout is smaller.

Recall elections will be the responsibility of the district where the officer is being recalled, instead of a county responsibility.

The bill also includes a provision to use a random alphabet rotation generated by computer for candidate name rotation on the ballot. This procedure would match all of our neighboring states except for Montana. Less than one third of the states in the country rotate candidates. Approximately \$50,000 would be saved every election.

The Secretary considered changing the procedures for early/absentee voting, but decided to wait and run a bill in a non election year.

H.B.413, the permanent absentee bill, is struggling and will probably not get out of committee.

H.B.402, lifting the limit on mailing in absentee ballot precincts, also lacks support.

House leadership is developing an election consolidation bill that would require all elections to be held on only two days a year, except for schools. Schools would be allowed two additional dates. All elections would be held under the direction of the county clerk. Consolidation is meant to encourage voter turnout. Counties would receive additional funding to run consolidated elections. The Secretary has always been in favor of consolidation but wants the schools, cities and counties to see and comment on the bill before he takes a position on it.

Public Education Campaign – “Make Your Mark”

The state and the counties will produce a voter education campaign that instructs voters to mark their ballot properly. Voters will also be instructed to check their ballots before they submit it to the ballot box. Poll workers are required to give a demonstration to each voter. Polling place accessibility and the ballot marking device for visually impaired voters will also be promoted

Other business from members of the committee

Barbara Roberts asked for an update on the voter registration data base.

The system is functioning well and the counties are doing well with it. There are some problems with batch scanning signature cards which the state and the vendor are addressing. The system slows down periodically when multiple counties are logged on. All the counties are doing a good job keeping data updated. The state is considering looking at interoperability between neighboring states to develop a regional data base.

All bills regarding a closed primary if they should pass this session will not be implemented until 2010.

Meeting was adjourned.