

**Help America Vote Act  
Idaho State Planning Committee  
Minutes, February 7, 2011**

The meeting was called to order by Jim Mairs. Those in attendance were:

Tim Hurst, Chief Deputy, Secretary of State  
Chis Rich, Ada County Clerk  
Phil McGrain, Chief Deputy Ada County  
Elenore Chehey, League of Women Voters  
Abbie Mace, Fremont County Clerk  
Patty Weeks, Nez Perce County Clerk  
Jim Mairs, HAVA Coordinator, Secretary of State Office

New members Abbie Mace, Fremont County Clerk and Patty Weeks, Nez Perce County Clerk were introduced to the committee.

The minutes for September 24, 2010 meeting were approved.

**Review of HHS Grants**

The federal reports for FY 2010 have been filled with HHS. Idaho reported \$58,281 was used this past year. Approximately \$14,000 was reimbursed to 4 counties for polling place access improvements. Approximately \$43,000 was used for the Primary and General election outreach and media campaigns, including a voter's guide, to educate voters about the new ID requirement at the polls. Currently Idaho has \$391, 910 available for reimbursement to counties for access improvements and to educate voters in the future, if funds continue to be available from the federal government.

With consolidated elections starting this year, it is expected there will be more requests from counties to improve their polling places. It is also expected that voter education will be important as well.

The question was asked if these funds were available for election consolidation use. These funds are reserved for access improvements. Consolidation expense reimbursement is available, for mapping software for example and other uses, from the \$1.5 million start up funds and 4.2 million election consolidation fund appropriated by the legislature. These funds must be directly used for consolidation.

**The Democracy Fund**

Approximately \$4 million are available in the Democracy fund to upgrade voting systems and improve the conduct of elections in the state.

\$1 million is allocated for the voter registration system support contract which is \$425,000 per year. The state is talking with the current vendor and the original developers to negotiate a better pricing agreement for maintenance, continued support and improvements to the system necessitated by election consolidation. After 2 years the

legislature will be asked to appropriate ongoing funds for maintenance of the system. The initial implementation was funded by HAVA from Congress.

The other \$3 million are available to counties to replace or upgrade their voting systems or improve the conduct of elections. These funds are a matching grant program with the counties contributing 20% of the total requested.

### **Preparation for Consolidated Elections**

Election consolidation workshops with the county clerks and election staff are scheduled the end of February in the northern, central and eastern regions of the state. The trainings will cover the entire election process. The training will cover procedures at the polls, new statutes passed last session and additional provisions in HB60, the election consolidation bill currently in committee.

The first consolidated election will be held March 8 for school bond and levies. The purpose of consolidation is to bring all elections in the state, 900 plus this year, including schools, under title 34. The intent is to provide uniformity, professionalism and enhance predictability for the voting public which hopefully will increase voter participation.

HB60 election bill, currently in the house state affairs committee, will standardize write-in and withdrawal deadlines and allow sub-districts to cancel elections, and save the expense, if no candidates or a single write-in declare for office. The bill also provides flexibility in how counties may use the funds provided by the legislature. Mr. Hurst asked the committee to contact him with any suggestions or changes they would like to see in future consolidation legislation.

### **Other Business**

The potential for a closed primary was discussed, that may require party registration and changes to poll procedures and ballot preparation for the Primary election. A court decision is pending.

Re-districting, which begins in June, was discussed. Boundaries will be important for counties as it may be an opportunity to align taxing district boundaries and precinct boundaries, which would simplify consolidated elections.

The AutoMARK ballot marking device was discussed. The question was asked if there was anything new, lighter, smaller and more affordable available. Currently there is not another system available for the blind and visually impaired for use in Idaho. We will continue to follow new product developments and systems that may be available in the future.

The meeting was adjourned.