

Help America Vote Act Planning Committee Meeting July 26, 2007

The meeting was called to order by Dr. James Weatherby. Those in attendance were Tim Hurst, Jim Mairs and Lisa Powers from the Secretary of State Office; Sharon Widner from Washington County; Dan English from Kootenai County; Chris Rich from Ada County; Kelly Buckland with Idaho State Independent Living Council; Elinor Chehey with League of Women Voters and Jim Hansen with United Vision for Idaho.

Minutes from the February 9, 2007 meeting were approved.

Review of HHS Grants

Idaho received another \$100,000 for polling place accessibility grants this year. That brings the total received to date to \$400,000. The balance remaining to the counties for accessibility upgrades is \$269,000. At the August clerk's conference counties will be encouraged to apply for funds to improve accessibility of polling places before the Primary election May 27, 2008.

The Democracy Fund

Updated spreadsheets were handed out. \$4.5 million was used for the AutoMARKs (the accessible voting device for every polling place) during the 2007 fiscal year. The current balance is \$7.7 million. Of that total, \$6 million is set aside for 20% matching grants to the counties to purchase or upgrade their voting system. Ada County's new optical scan software and tabulation equipment has been delivered. Canyon County is in the contract negotiation phase now to purchase an optical scan system for next year and there are 15 other counties that are looking at upgrading existing systems with new tabulators or changing to optical scan systems. New voting systems need to be ordered by September 28, 2007, to allow for delivery, installation and testing if they are to be used in the 2008 elections.

Optical Scan Voting Systems for the 2008 Elections

The ES&S M650 tabulation machines sold in Idaho will now use enhanced sensor technology approved for use at the April certification hearing for ES&S equipment. The read light source will be upgraded from a red light laser to a green light laser. The new green light sensor will read everything except green pen. This upgrade increases the sensitivity of the tabulator and allows the tabulator to recognize and read more types of marking devices including #2 pencils and various ink and colors and pen types. However the tabulator is also more sensitive to "indeterminate read marks" and other stray marks on the ballot. When the tabulator encounters an indeterminate read mark it stops so that the ballot can be reviewed by hand. Election workers may have to evaluate a greater

number of ballots to determine the voter's intent if a ballot is marked incorrectly and or is other wise not readable by machine.

Public Education Campaign

The current plan is to build on the campaign produced in 2006 with emphasis on voting accessibility. Ada County will be producing voter education campaigns on how to use the new optical scan voting system. They will be using Spuddy Buddy as their logo with the slogan "Make the Mark Dark". They will also be sending out approximately 2,500 practice ballots as a mock election to test the new equipment and train staff on the new processes and procedures required for the optical scan system.

Ballot Marking Device upgrade and training

The AutoMark will be upgraded from 1.0 to the 1.1 version during the preventative maintenance cycle this summer and fall based on successful testing completed during the ES&S certification hearings last April. Another upgrade (AutoMARK version 1.3) that will address most of the problems encountered during the 2006 elections may be available this year for certification. ES&S is working on an upgrade to the AutoMARK that will eject the ballot so a person with a manual dexterity disability will not have to pull on the ballot to remove it from the device.

State Plan progress to date

Idaho is on track. The main goal for last year was to provide an accessible voting machine (AutoMark) in every polling place. That goal was met. We have made improvements to the Voter Registration System, provided voter education, and poll worker training. We are working with ES&S to expand training programs for those counties that choose to purchase new optical scan systems or upgrade an existing system. The vendor will not only provide tabulator training but also ballot management training to assist counties in designing and implementing the new procedures required by a change to an optical scan voting system. Next year there will be a trouble shooting guide for poll workers to refer to if the AutoMark does not work properly at the polls. Poll workers will be trained to troubleshoot basic problems with the device and instructed to call the county for assistance if they can not get the device up and running at the polls. Counties will also be encouraged to have spare devices available to substitute for non-working devices and a backup plan to fix machines at the polls by trained staff.

There was brief discussion on the H.R. 811 (Holt Bill).

Meeting was adjourned.