



## 2009 – The Off Season?

I am frequently asked what we do in a year when there is no primary or general election. (Some people still think we only work 2 days of the year). But after conducting nine elections from November 2007 through November 2008, we have a lot of catching up to do along with our usual off-cycle duties.

Voter Services is busy completing our list maintenance to insure that our voter rolls are current and accurate. With more than 267,000 registered voters, this is no easy task. We take change of address information received from the United States Postal Service and mail notices to each voter who has moved. We then move any voter we have not heard from as a result of the notices to the inactive list. Staff are also reviewing and updating our early voting and voter services training manuals.

The Absentee Ballot Department is verifying initiative petition signatures and already some candidate petitions. They are redesigning our absentee ballot envelope to help reduce mailing costs and researching a replacement of our envelope printer.

Poll Workers is completing and fine-tuning our on-line poll worker training modules along with updating, revising and organizing poll worker records. They are also creating an on-line zone technician training program. Election materials are being reviewed and/or improved. The first of four scheduled orientations for poll worker recruitment were held on July 20 and 21.

IT has been assisting administration with adding historical information to our new Web site, installing an equipment tracking system and a new network storage device, working on improvements to our voter registration system and conducting an electronic leave-slip study—just a few of their many projects.

The Voting Equipment Facility is completing equipment maintenance, preparing ballots and records for storage retention, shredding all materials that have passed the retention schedule, and organizing the warehouse for the 2010 cycle.

Administration is reviewing and revising security procedures, creating and entering Web site information, conducting voter registration and voter education activities, including youth summer camps and programs, revising our policies and procedures manual and updating our COOP (Continuation of Operation Plan) which goes into effect in the event of a hurricane or other disaster.

Finally, all employees are required to take at least one on-line training program offered by the county to acquire additional skills. One staffer has actually taken classes to assist us in our “Go Green” initiative.

I recently attended our FSASE Summer Conference in St. Augustine and the IACREOT conference in Washington to keep current on what is happening at the state and national levels.

All of this is in preparation for a hectic 2010 election cycle and we will be ready!

## 2009 - 2010 Elections

Election	Election Day	Last Day to Register
<a href="#">City of Venice</a>	November 3, 2009	October 5, 2009
<a href="#">Primary Election</a>	August 24, 2010	July 26, 2010
<a href="#">General Election</a>	November 2, 2010	October 4, 2010

## Legislative Update

Elections came out unscathed during the legislative session in Tallahassee this year. There were no election bills passed. This means we have no unfunded mandates and no substantive changes to the way we do business here at your elections office. We are carefully monitoring federal bills that have been introduced and will keep you updated as they progress – or not.

We do have three constitutional amendments that will be placed by the Legislature on the November 2, 2010 ballot and, as of now, one citizen's initiative amendment. The deadline for other citizen initiatives is February 1.

## Engaging Youth and Bridging the Generation Gap

Youth participation in the electoral process is alive and well and growing in Sarasota County, thanks, in part, to the continuing success of the supervisor of elections (SOE) student poll worker program.

SOE staff visit local high school and college campuses on a regular basis, to register students to vote, educate them about the voting process, and make them aware of other opportunities to get involved in the process. Since the student poll worker program began in 2002, hundreds of students from all county schools have experienced first-hand the excitement and flurry of Election Day.

In the 2008 Presidential Election, 244 students worked at the polls. This was a real plus, especially in precincts that have a younger demographic and where, typically, most students live. These precincts present the biggest human resources challenges on election day because so many people who live in them work and are unable to commit the time required to be poll workers.

Students, including those who are home-schooled or attend private schools and are registered or pre-registered to vote in Sarasota County, are welcome to participate in the student poll worker program. An application and a W-4 form may be completed and then downloaded from the SOE Web site at [www.sarasotavotes.com](http://www.sarasotavotes.com).

Once the SOE office receives a student's application, completed W-4, and other required documents, we notify the student by letter of his/her precinct assignment and training date. Whenever possible, students are assigned to their home precincts.

Overall, the response to the program from school board and instructional staff, the voting public, and the older, more experience poll workers continues to be overwhelmingly positive. Student workers are knowledgeable about and comfortable with technology, have the energy and endurance for the long day, and are eager to share the Election Day responsibility with the regular poll workers.



**Do you know someone who fits this description?**

### **The requirements to be a poll worker in Sarasota County**

You must be at least 16 years old and registered or pre-registered to vote.

You must be able to read and write English

You must attend a scheduled poll worker training class prior to each election



## Poll Worker Coordinator Workshop

SOE staff from the poll worker department recently attended a workshop for poll worker coordinators, hosted by the Polk County supervisor of elections office. Representatives from 17 counties gathered in Bartow to share ideas about online training, training videos, Power point tools, poll worker recruitment and poll worker appreciation.

Karen Crete and Eileen Everhart gave presentations about Sarasota County's online training program and poll worker recruitment efforts.

Several presentations concentrated on ideas that could be produced in-house at minimal cost. In a time of economic budget "tightening" and focus on fiscal responsibility to our community, this seminar gave the supervisor of election offices an opportunity to discuss creative ideas for growth.

The honorable Lori Edwards, supervisor of elections of Polk County, attended and joined in the discussions. Everyone agreed the time together was beneficial. Plans are currently under way for a future meeting to be hosted by our very own supervisor of elections office.



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WE'RE ON THE WEB!!  
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## **Absentee Ballots - Voting Around the World!**

Perhaps you have requested an absentee ballot for a past election due to your inability to vote at the poll on election day. For some voters, this is a constant reality because they reside on another continent! Several years ago, the absentee ballot department decided to chronicle the locations to which ballots were sent throughout the world. With a map, a few years of gathering information, and more than a few boxes of map pins, they have quite a story to tell.

For the November 2008 General Election, the Sarasota county supervisor of elections office mailed close to 130,000 absentee ballots, including nearly 1,500 to military and overseas voters.

Ballots were sent to over 445 different locations in 104 countries on all seven continents. We even sent a ballot to Antarctica where a gentleman was stationed on a research project! From Afghanistan to Zambia, countries as small as Vatican City, Luxembourg and Monaco to remote locations throughout China and Russia, absentee ballots found their way around the world and back again.

Whether you work overseas, serve in our military or just enjoy traveling the world, your ballot is just a phone call or e-mail away. Who knows...we may need a map pin to record your adventure!



Donna George of the Absentee Ballot Dept.

