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COST OF
CONVENIENCE

REINVESTMENT NEEDS - Advance Voting

Summary

Advance voting was approved by the Legislature in 1995, and became effective on July 1, 1995. Any registered voter may now choose to cast a ballot before the election **without having to specify a reason**. The advance voting process is very similar to the former absentee voting process. Voters now have three options (1) to vote in person at the Election Office 20 days in advance; or (2) vote by mail 20 days in advance of the election; or (3) vote in person at the polls on Election Day. In Johnson County, we believe that advance voting will alleviate crowding at the polls on Election Day.

Effect on the Election Office

The impact of implementing advance voting is summarized below:

- Need to publicize and educate voters about this new option.
- Requires additional staff to conduct election activities for 20 additional days for each election.
- Additional costs related to the Application for an Advance Ballot, i.e. paper, printing, envelopes, postage, and staff to process the applications. The State Statutes also require that a ballot be mailed within 48 hours of receiving the application.
- Additional costs related to producing paper ballots for in-house and mail voting, i.e. ballot stock, envelopes, postage, and staff to process the paper ballots.
- Requires additional computer equipment to generate in-house and mail ballots. Additional costs include reconfiguration of the office, and purchase of work stations, etc.
- Requires additional optical scanning equipment to electronically store and tally paper ballots.
- Requires software modifications to provide for tallying advance ballots by precinct; to develop a two-step process for electronically storing and processing the ballots; and to allow for the placement of precinct committee people names on the advance voting ballot.
- Need to convene the special election board prior to Election Day to electronically store the paper ballots. The number of working days will fluctuate depending on the quantity of mail ballots.

ADVANCE VOTING - Summary of Projected Costs

The costs related to advance voting are summarized below as "one-time costs", and "on-going costs". The equipment costs are funded through the 1996 CIP, and are included in the "one-time costs".

One-Time Costs

Printing	\$ 7,677.93	
Office Reconfiguration	8,981.95	
Ballot Boxes	421.05	
Equipment (1996 CIP)	200,102.28	
Total One-Time Costs		\$217,183.21
(excluding CIP funding)		\$ 17,080.93

On-Going Projected Costs (for 1996 elections)

Printing/Commodities	35,511.84	
Postage	38,885.76	
Staffing	24,400.00	
Utilities	3,500.00	
Total On-Going Costs (for 1996)		\$102,297.60

On-Going Projected Costs (for 1997 elections)

Printing/Commodities	9,836.57	
Postage	10,690.00	
Staffing	12,200.00	
Utilities	1,750.00	
Total On-Going Costs (for 1997)		\$ 34,476.57

On-Going Projected Costs (for 1998 elections)

Printing/Commodities	19,146.57	
Postage	20,988.00	
Staffing	24,400.00	
Utilities	3,500.00	
Total On-Going Costs (for 1998)		\$ 68,034.57

COST SAVINGS

Recognizing the additional costs related to these unfunded mandates, the Election Office staff is pleased to report the following cost savings, to date:

- Microsoft is the corporate sponsor of our Student Election Outreach Program. They will be donating computer equipment valued at approximately \$50,000.
- Staff coordinated the mailing of our advance voting flyer with the County Appraiser's Office property appraisal notices, for a savings of approximately \$30,000.
- Staff worked with the Shawnee Mission School District to film a training video for boardworkers. Their time, effort, and all materials were provided free of charge, an in-kind service valued at approximately \$8,000.
- Staff coordinated the development of Braille ballots, to be provided free by Shawnee Mission School District, a value of approximately \$100.
- Staff successfully negotiated a reduction in fees for certain polling places, saving approximately \$500 per year.
- Advance voting applications were sent home with elementary students in Blue Valley and Shawnee Mission School Districts. These areas experienced long lines in 1992.
- Radio announcements from stations KMBZ-AM, KCMO-AM, KCMO-FM, and KLTH-FM were provided free of charge, a savings valued at \$1,430 for March and April, 1996. These announcements reach an audience of 595,800 listeners.
- Staff is currently working with Sun Newspapers, Olathe Daily News, and Journal Herald to print the application for advance ballot in their newspapers, free of charge.
- The Kansas City Star will print 1,000 advance voting posters free of charge, a savings valued at \$1,120. Also, the Shawnee Mission School District will provide at-cost printing for the statewide quantities for the advance voting posters. This cost will be paid directly by the Secretary of State's Office.
- Election office staff are working "flex" hours during the advance voting period before each election. We estimate that this will save the County 252 hours of overtime per election, or approximately \$3,700 per election (based on four elections in 1996).
- Staff anticipated the additional costs related to advance voting by utilizing available funds in 1995 for printing of applications, etc.

TOTAL APPROXIMATE SAVINGS: \$105,950.00

FUTURE SOLUTIONS

Advance voting and NVRA laws have increased the amount of paper flow in the Election Office. Our future plans include utilizing improved technology to reduce and streamline the paper flow, in the following ways:

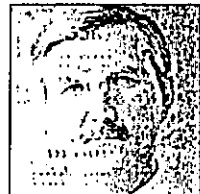
- Work toward implementing new legislation that would allow satellite election offices. This would enable people to vote at any location throughout the County, 20 days prior to an election. With new technology, we could eliminate the in-house paper ballot, and reduce the quantity of mail ballots.
- Consider consolidation of polling places, to reduce costs associated with staffing, etc.
- Install an optical imaging system with signature verification. This would reduce the staffing needs for filing and retrieval of voter registration cards.
- Implement bar code technology to reduce staffing needs for data entry.
- Utilize new technology to link voter registration sites to enable us to electronically transmit and receive data at the Election Office. This would reduce staffing needs for data entry of registration cards.
- Investigate new technology for voting, working toward a goal of streamlining the process with enhanced computer equipment. A long range goal is to eliminate the need to store and transport the voting machines. Staff would propose that future equipment purchases be multi-functional and coordinated with other county departments.

Paying the price for convenience

Residents wanted voting to be easier, but shorter lines cost more.

When Johnson County voters stood in long lines for hours during the last presidential election, they got mad and demanded changes.

County officials and state lawmakers have responded with 160 additional voting machines — at \$5,300 per machine — and advance voting.



Jim Stullinger

COUNTY
NOTEBOOK

and vote up to 20 days before a primary or general election. Or they can request a mail ballot.

But there is a price to pay for shorter lines, and on Monday

county commissioners got an advance look at the bill.

In addition to the extra voting machines purchased over the last four years, election officials said they would need at least \$167,000 more for this year's budget.

What would that buy?

Most of the money — \$118,000 — would be used to bring the county into compliance with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993. The money will go mainly for extra voting materials.

But the money also will help relieve long lines:

■ The polls could be kept open longer. Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt proposed keeping the polls open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. during the Nov. 5 presidential election. Polls are normally open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

■ Paper ballots will be held in reserve to supplement the electronic voting machines, if necessary.

■ More portable voting booths will be purchased.

Voting is often called a right and a duty, but don't call it free.

Schoofs kickoff

Republican candidate Greg

Schoofs has launched his congressional campaign with an endorsement from U.S. Rep. Jim Kolbe, the senior Republican on the House Budget and Appropriations Committee.

The Arizona Republican was the featured speaker Sunday at a Schoofs fund-raiser at the Indian Hills Country Club in Mission Hills.

"I know Greg, and I know that he is a person who will come to Washington and tackle the tough issues like serious entitlement reform and real tax reform — not just talk about it," Kolbe told a crowd of about 50 persons.

Schoofs is running for the 3rd District seat in Kansas being vacated by Rep. Jan Meyers of Overland Park.

At a rally the next day, Schoofs said he would not attack the other candidates in the GOP field.

"Let's save our fire for Judy Hancock and her failed liberal agenda in the fall," he said.

Odds and ends

■ Johnson County Democrats will hold an open house at 7 p.m.

Friday at their new office at 7327 W. 79th St. in Overland Park. The party's congressional candidates, as well as state and local candidates, have been invited to attend. For more information, call 432-9938.

■ Vince Snowbarger, Republican candidate for Congress, has scheduled a family picnic for 6:30 p.m. Friday at Shelter No. 3 in Heritage Park, 159th and Plumm Road. A donation of \$35 per family is suggested. Those interested in attending are asked to call 397-0500.

■ Gary Hammack, 40, of Overland Park, has entered the race for Johnson County clerk.

Hammack, a Republican, is the senior manager of data network security for Sprint Corp. The clerk's office is held by Beverly Baker, a Republican.

Hammack was an unsuccessful candidate last year for Johnson County Community College trustee.

He has a site on the Internet at www.sky.net/~ghammack.

Voter-friendly elections could add \$167,000 to county tax bill

Steve Porter
Daily News Reporter

Making it easier this year for voters to go to the polls may cost Johnson County taxpayers an additional \$167,000, Johnson County Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt said Monday.

The cost includes savings that the county is banking on: as many as 500 volunteers, voters responding to the call for advance balloting and some funding shifts that will keep

costs down.

During the 1992 general election, more than 197,400 people cast ballots in Johnson County, crowding the polls and forcing some to wait in line more than four hours to vote. Since then, the county has purchased another 160 voting machines to bolster the 700 electronic machines they bought in 1988. But even that wasn't expected to be enough because of changing factors in registration and vot-

ing. ■ See NEW, Page 2

6-11-96

New voting technologies could be costly for county taxpayers

■ NEW, From Page 1

Schmidt explained that two changes since the 1992 presidential election have increased registration, but also have given the county a tool to take pressure off polling places. Advance voting, approved last year by the Kansas Legislature, allows registered voters to cast their ballots up to 20 days before Election Day. The paper ballots that are required to be printed, mailed out and processed have resulted in additional costs to the county, however.

"In reality, we will have 84 election days in 1996 instead of four," Schmidt told Johnson County Commissioners. "It means more paper because we will be distributing paper ballots by mail, and those voting in person will be voting on paper ballots. It will mean more people needed to process that paper."

Johnson County Commissioner David Wysong, R-1st District, saw regression instead of progress, despite the possibility of shorter lines and easier voting come Nov. 5.

"Are we going backward to go forward?" he asked.

Schmidt said it was temporary, but despite the move eight years ago from mechanical to electronic voting machines, advance voting requires using paper ballots.

She said that the National Voter Registration Act, which makes it easier for potential voters to register, has also had an effect. Federal regulations have mandated larger voter registration cards, made it more cumbersome and costly to purge non-voters from the rolls and added other steps that require a fatter county election budget.

Currently the 1996 budget for the Johnson County Election Commission is \$1,375,679, but Schmidt said that the two programs, advance voting and NVRA, could create additional costs of up to \$438,000 in this year alone. Through reallocation of capital improvement project money formerly earmarked for additional voting

machines, the election office could pay for computing, scanning and processing equipment for paper ballots that would be more cost-effective than buying more electronic voting machines.

Schmidt also suggested keeping polls open an additional two hours, beginning at 6 a.m. instead of 7 a.m. and closing at 8 p.m. instead of 7 p.m. And paper voting booths and paper ballots — more flexible than the precinct-specific electronic voting machines — could be dispatched by an election commission "SWAT team" to "hot spots," precincts where large numbers of registered voters have not already cast ballots by mid-afternoon on Election Day, Schmidt said.

Wysong was frustrated at the additional costs foisted on the county by state and federal governments, even if it will mean more people exercising their voting rights and shorter lines on Election Day.

Funding for the unanticipated costs could come from several sources, according to Susie Rowland, acting budget director. The county commission could draw money from \$700,000 available in reinvestment savings, because the expenses could be considered an investment in future election processes. Or the money could be found through savings in other departments, the contingency fund or the undesignated fund balance.

"We are asking to have money allocated as needed," Schmidt said. "We definitely will also need extra funds in 1997 and 1998 to comply with advance voting and NVRA." Those costs are expected to be about \$50,000 in 1997 and \$87,000 more in 1998.

Commissioner Johnna Harris-Lingle, R-1st District, was reluctant to commit to a source now.

"I would hope that on the advance voting costs, we wait until the end of the year to determine where this money comes from," she said.

Services are outweighed by demands

County officials seeking help for Nov. 5 election

Steve Porter
Daily News Reporter

Demands on the Johnson County Election Office taxed the county's computer services so much during the primary election that county officials will farm out some work to avoid a disaster on general election day.

Johnson County Commissioners agreed Thursday to spend about \$60,000 to send out some computer and printing work and bring in more help at the polls Nov. 5 in the hope that the county can stay afloat in a sea of voters come election day.

"We are concerned that unless some action is taken, we will have very big problems," said County Administrator Gene Denton. "As a result of the last primary, our level of confidence on a scale of 1 to 10 is about a 2," he said, referring to the ability of the county's Information Technology Services and Election Office to conduct the general election and process its results.

More eligible voters, advanced voting and printing and processing new paper ballots have provided more flexibility to voters, but created technical breakdowns, slowdowns on the county's mainframe computer and a need for more helpers. To fix those problems, Johnson County Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt proposed three solutions:

- Farming out printing of paper ballots to a private vendor instead of doing them in-house to avoid delays in advance and mail voting processes. That could cost up to \$40,000.
 - Improving the capacity of the county's mainframe computer system.
 - Increasing pay for election day workers at the polls. Currently they receive \$60, and
- See SERVICES, Page 2A

Services on election day are outweighed by county demand

■ SERVICES, From Page 1A

Schmidt proposes increasing that to \$70. The cost will add another \$25,000 to the cost of conducting the general election.

Helping offset those costs is a \$35,000 check from the Kansas Secretary of State's office to reimburse the county for implementing advance voting. Denton and Schmidt believe the rest of the costs can be paid through end-of-year sav-

ings and dipping into the county's contingency funds.

Denton and acting Information Technology Services director Steve Patterson told Johnson County Commissioners that the election office's computer demands come at a bad time for the county's computer system. In October, the county begins printing tax bills, certifying levies and printing paper ballots for advance and mail-in voting if the ballot job isn't farmed out to a pri-

ivate vendor.

"Taking the ballots off the mainframe's load will increase our confidence level to about an 8, but still there are some measures that need to be taken," Denton said. "The big problem is to make sure the election works and the tax bills are printed. We can't do it with the present system. The mainframe is still overloaded, it is still a problem and there are some things that need to be done."

Denton and Patterson continued to urge the commissioners to approve acquiring more capacity for the county's mainframe computer system. Commissioners have delayed action on the issue, awaiting outcome of a technical audit of the Information Technology Systems and the selection of a new director for the department. Denton said it may be October or later before he selects the new department head.

**NEW
DOCUMENT**

Johnson County Election Office



Connie Schmidt - Election Commissioner
Richard Venturella - Director of Operations

March 15, 1997

Election Center Colleagues:

On behalf of the Johnson County, Kansas Election Office staff, welcome to Kansas City!

The enclosed information regarding advance voting in Johnson County is separated into four categories:

- Promoting Voting
- Moving the Masses
- Cost of Convenience
- Our Success Story

I also invite you to visit our office for a tour on Monday afternoon. We are currently conducting advance voting for the April 1, 1997 election, and programming our voting machines for Election Day activities. A map is enclosed for your use.

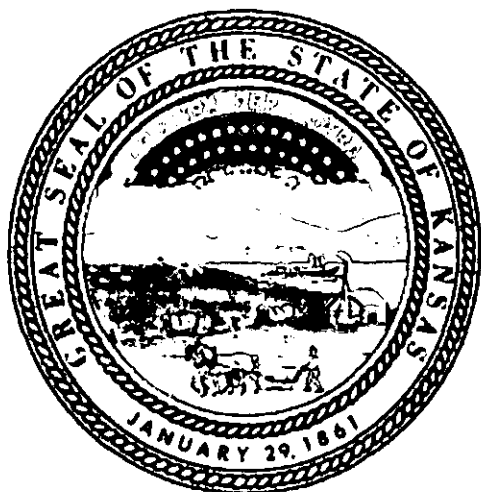
As always, if you have questions after you leave today's meeting, please feel free to call.

JOHNSON COUNTY ELECTION OFFICE

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Connie".

Connie Schmidt
Election Commissioner

**NEW
DOCUMENT**



Johnson County Kansas Election Office

**Connie Schmidt
Election Commissioner**

WHAT'S NEW!!
General Election - April 1
*** Sample Ballots By Address ***
Advance Voting Begins March 12
Voter Registration Ends March 17
*** Candidate List and Biographical Data ***

Revision Date: 03/14/97 (5:00 p.m.)

<i>Spring '97 Elections</i>	<i>General Information</i>
<p align="center"><small>NEW!</small> <u>Sample Ballots By Address</u></p> <p align="center"><small>NEW!</small> <u>Candidates - Biographical Data</u> <u>General Election - APRIL 1</u></p> <p align="center"><small>NEW!</small> <u>Questions On The Ballot</u> <u>General Election - APRIL 1</u></p> <p align="center"><small>(UPDATED)</small> <u>Registration - Advance Ballots</u> <u>Summary Reports</u></p> <p align="center"><small>NEW!</small> <u>News Release</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Advance Voting - Application</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Calendar - Highlights</u> <u>at a Glance</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Make Your Vote Count</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Polling Place List</u></p>	<p align="center"><u>Registration Sites</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Voter Registration</u></p> <p align="center"><u>How We Count The Votes</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Elected Officials</u></p> <p align="center"><u>How To File For Office</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Secretary of State's Homepage</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Student Outreach Programs</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Government & Election</u> <u>Web Site References</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Johnson County Web Sites</u></p> <p align="center"><u>Election Commissioner's</u> <u>Annual Summary 1996</u></p> <p align="center"><u>November 96 Election Data</u></p> <p align="center"><u>February 97 Election Data</u></p>

Please send any comments or questions to the developer at election@jocoelection.org or to the Johnson County Election Office, 2101 E. Kansas City Road, Olathe Kansas 66061.

This site was custom crafted and developed by

TO THE JOHNSON COUNTY ELECTION OFFICE FROM CROWN CENTER

In the front of the Westin Crown Center go right on Pershing to Grand.
 Left on Grand (approximately 9 blocks) to Truman.
 Left on Truman to I-35 South.
 South on I-35 to 119th Street.
 Exit on 119th Street and go west (or to the right).
 At the bottom of the overpass is a light at Renner Rd.
 South (or to the left) on Renner Rd. to Kansas City Rd. (Renner stops at Ks. City Rd.)
 West (or to the right) on Kansas City Rd. and we are the first building on the left.
 2101 E. Kansas City Rd.

