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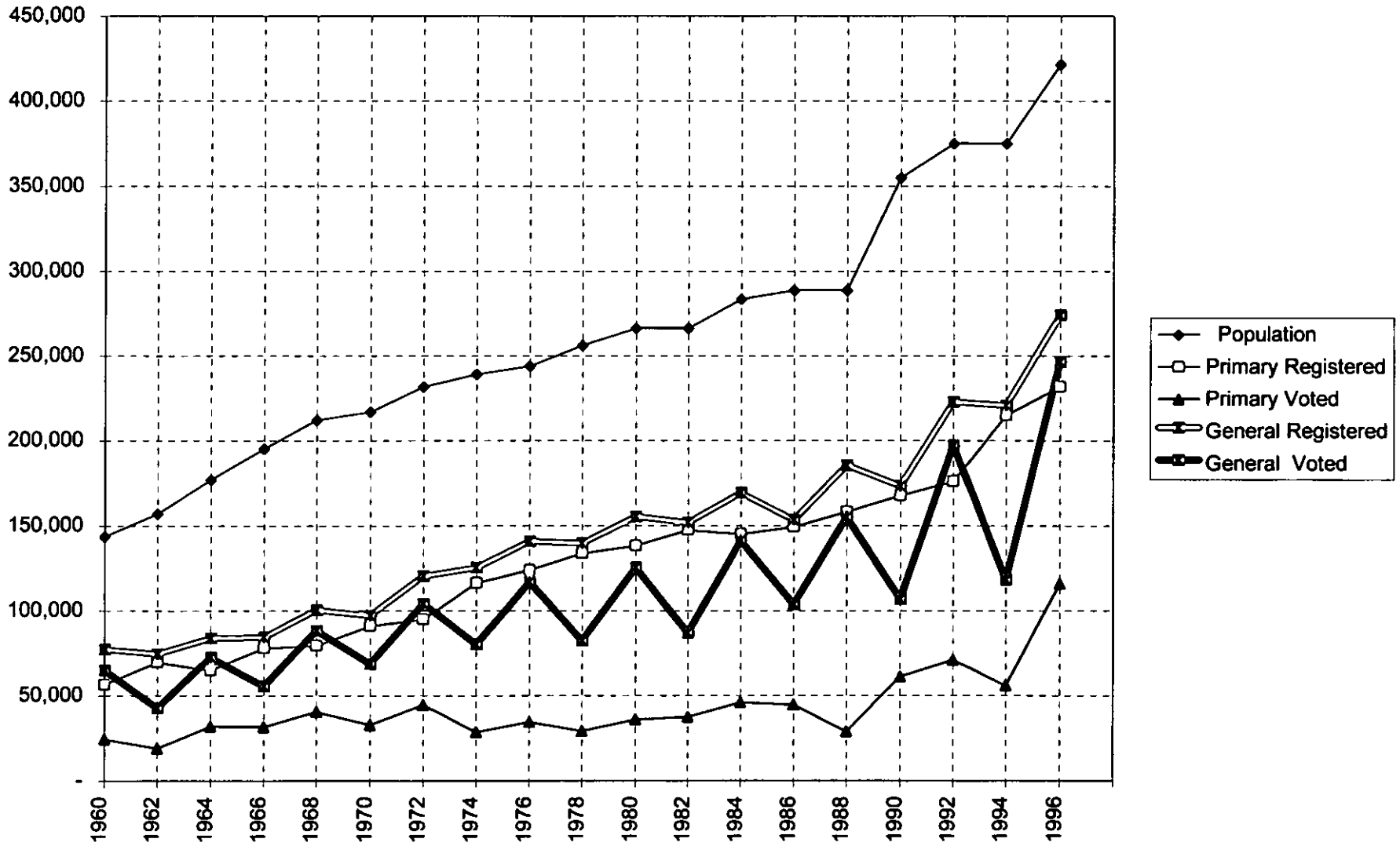


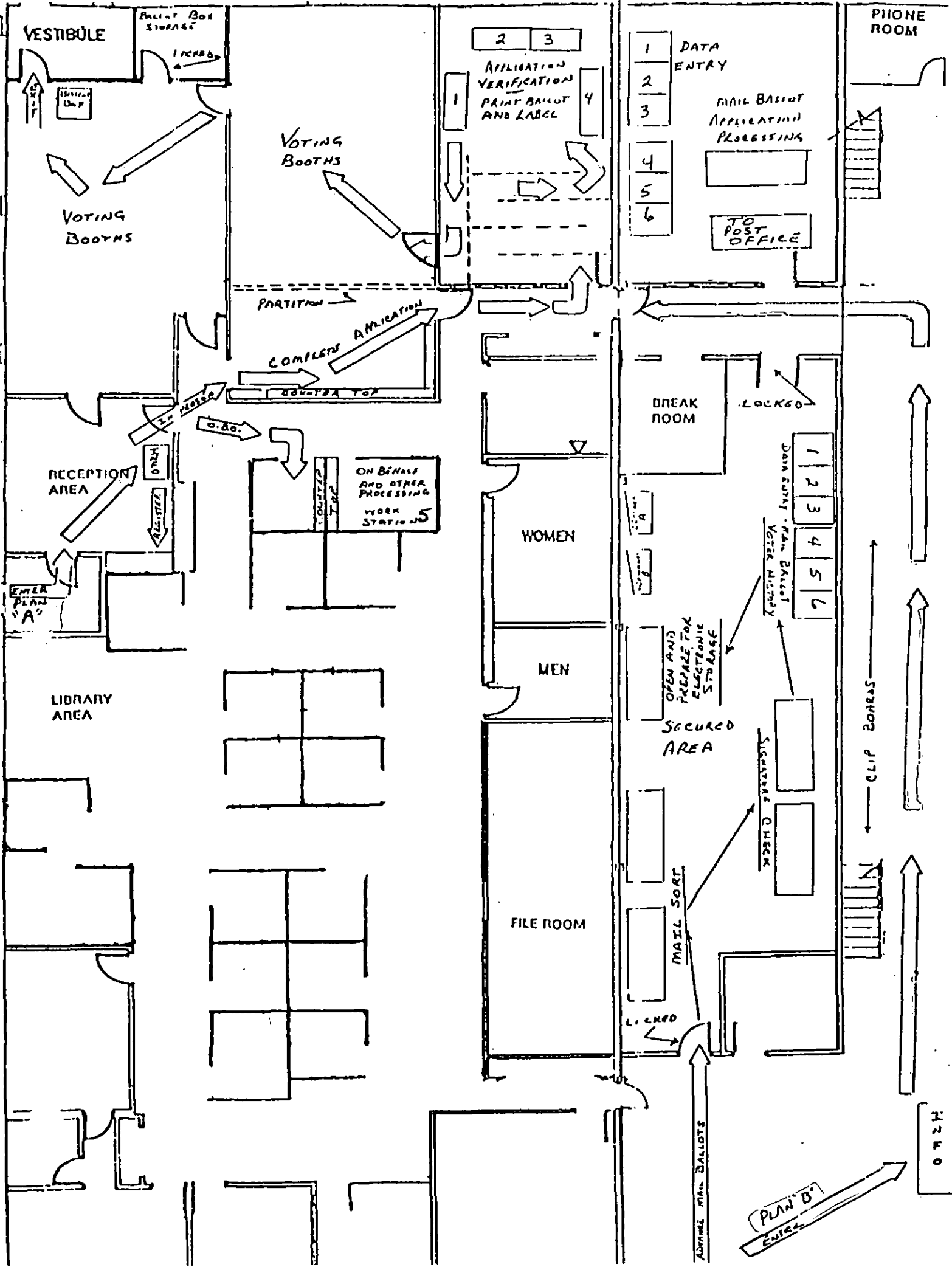
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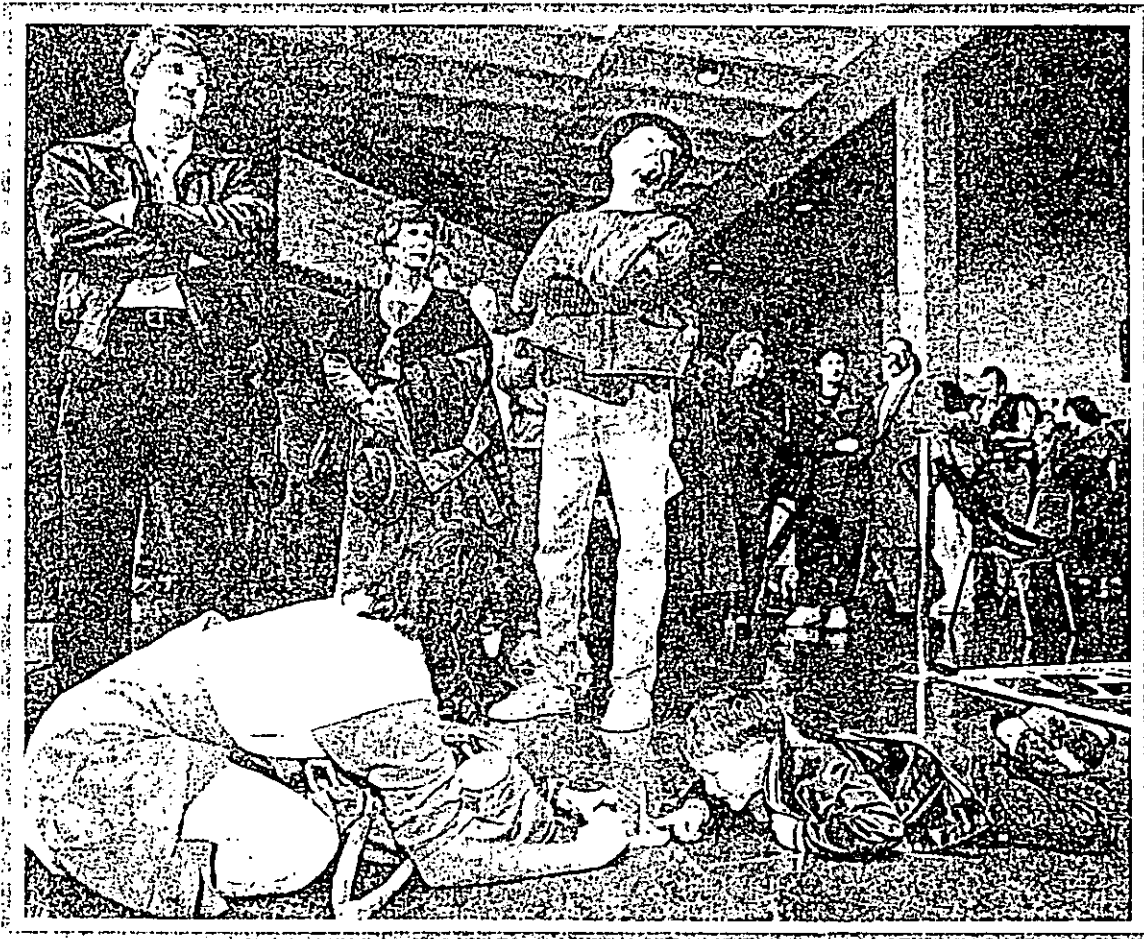
MOVE THE MASSES

1960-1996

### REGISTRATION AND VOTING TRENDS JOHNSON COUNTY KANSAS







**Making their vote count is important to Johnson Countians - which is why long lines can be expected at the polls on election day.**

## VOTER REGISTRATION OFFERED AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS

**VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION**  
 2101 E. Kansas City Road  
 Olathe, Kan. 66061  
 782-3441, Ext. 5

Johnson County residents can apply for voter registration at the county election office, libraries, city halls, community college and when obtaining or renewing their driver licenses. Citizens may request registration forms by calling or writing the Johnson County Election office.

All Johnson County residents can now apply for advance voter ballots. Applications may be picked up at any library or city hall prior to any election.

For advance voting in 1996, there are three options: advance voting by mail 20 days prior to each election; advance voting in person at the Election Office for 20 days prior to each election; and voting at the polls on election day.

Eligible voters in Kansas must be 18 years old by election day, live in their precinct 14 days before each election, be US citizens and be registered to vote. Registration remains permanent unless residents change their names or addresses. General elections are held the first Tuesday after the first

Monday in November during even numbered years. Primary elections are held the first Tuesday in August during even numbered years. City and school elections are held the first Tuesday in April during odd numbered years. Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

**ORGANIZATION INFORMS VOTERS**

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS**  
 Birch Lane  
 Prairie Village, Kan. 66207  
 648-7384  
 President: Marjorie Kirkwood

The League of Women Voters is a political, but nonpartisan organization of women and men. The League provides voter service information, studies issues, develops a position statement based upon membership consensus and then takes action at the local, state and national level.

Each member is encouraged to participate in the party of her or his choice and to be politically active.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| Drug Enforcement Administration<br>Kansas City District Office<br>..... 236-3257                                 | National Labor Relations Board<br>..... 236-3000   |
| Environmental Protection Agency<br>General Information<br>..... 551-7000   | Postal Services<br>24-hour information service<br>..... 421-5272<br>ZIP code information<br>..... 842-2800 |
| Equal Employment Opportunity Commission<br>..... 551-5655  | Small Business Administration<br>Regional Office<br>..... 374-6380   |
| Federal Bureau of Investigation<br>Main Office ..... 691-8200<br>Hotline for public corruption<br>..... 221-7727 | Social Security Administration<br>Overland Park<br>..... (800) 772-1213                                    |
| Federal Emergency Management Agency<br>Information ..... 283-7063  | Federal Aviation Administration<br>Regional Operations Center<br>..... 426-4600                            |
| Internal Revenue Service<br>Federal Tax Information<br>..... (800) 829-1040                                      | Federal Highway Administration - Motor Vehicle Recall Inquiries<br>..... (800) 424-9393                    |
| US Attorney - Kansas<br>..... 551-6730   | National Highway Traffic Safety Administration<br>..... 822-7233   |
| US Marshal - Kansas<br>..... 551-6727  | Department of Veteran Affairs - Benefits Information and Assistance<br>..... 426-2210                      |
| Bureau of Labor Statistics<br>Overland Park District<br>..... 236-3220   |  |

TUESDAY  
APRIL 30, 1996

# THE OLATHE DAILY NEWS

TIMOTHY P. O'DONNELL, PUBLISHER

SCOTT SMITH, GENERAL MANAGER

LAIRD MACGREGOR, MANAGING EDITOR

GERALD HAY, CITY EDITOR

## Ready, set, vote

■ Along with convenience, advanced voting also means earlier start to election season

The election season has hit its normal spring lull, as the hubbub from the presidential primaries has subsided and the summer sizzle of the national conventions and runoff primaries is still months away.

But this election year promises to be very different, thanks not only to the large turnover in officeholders at all levels, but also a major change in Kansas voting law.

Beginning this year, Kansas voters will have the opportunity to complete and cast their ballots for 21 days prior to Election Day. This method, known as advance voting, will be in use starting with the Aug. 6 primary.

Voters wishing to use the new method can apply for an advance ballot by calling the Johnson County Election Office, 782-3441, or can pick up applications at any City Hall or public library in the county. Also, Internet users can find advance voting applications on the election office's home page, whose address is [jocoelection.org](http://jocoelection.org).

The deadline for registering to vote in the August primary, be it through advance voting or the more conventional trip to the neighborhood polling place, is July 22. The deadline for filing to run for office, by the way, is June 10.

For those somewhat squeamish about casting their votes days or even weeks before Election Day, be advised that the actual counting will not begin until Election Day. Though it won't make state election offices any less hectic after the polls close, election officials expect the added convenience will enhance voter turnout (mailout?) and thus enhance the entire election process.

Still, it will take some getting used to. No standing in long lines at the polling place. No pressure to complete the ballot quickly to make room in the booth for the next voter. The kitchen table or the favorite easy chair can now be the polling place.

Where do we sign up?

— Laird MacGregor

# Advance Voting is Here

*System intended to end long lines at polls during elections*

By Hea Willson  
Sun Correspondent

If you want to avoid standing in line Aug. 6, Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt has a new plan for you.

It's called advance voting, introduced in Kansas earlier this year for municipal elections.

All registered voters are eligible for advance voting. They don't need to be out-of-town on election day or ill or otherwise unable to get to the polls.

"People still think they have to have an excuse. They think that they are not eligible," Schmidt said.

As of July 2, only 3,332 people out of a possible 152,407 registered Republicans and Democrats had applied for advance voting ballots for the Aug. 6 primary, Schmidt said.

"I'm a little disappointed now, but we expect to receive more," Schmidt said.

Many people are uninformed about advance voting, but candidates, cities and even employers in the county are getting the word out and making applications available, Schmidt said.

Schmidt's office will know by mid-afternoon on the Monday before the election how many people voted in advance. This will help them estimate how busy the polls will be the next day.

In the past decade, voter turnout has varied widely in the August primaries from a low of 18 percent in 1988 to 40 percent in 1992.

Only Republicans and Democrats can vote in the primary. As of July 2, 152,407 people were eligible, or about 67 percent of the registered voters.

In her first year as election commissioner, Schmidt is making no predictions on voter turnout or how many people will take advantage of advance voting.

"After November we will be able to analyze it then," Schmidt said.

Here's how advance voting works:

1. Be sure you are registered to vote. Registration closes July 22.

2. Pick up an advance voting application. These are available at the election office, city halls, public libraries, voter registration sites, on the internet - or on Page 15 of this guide. The Election Office's home page is <http://www.jucoelection.org>.

Run off copies of this application. Voters must submit a separate application for the November general election.

Mail the application to the election office, 2101 E. Kansas City Road, Olathe, KS 66061. The forms cannot be faxed.

The deadline for applying for an advance voting ballot for the August primary is Aug. 2.

3. Starting 20 days before the election — July 17 for this primary — the election office will start mailing out ballots.

Relax, ponder the issues and candidates and then vote in the comfort of your own home or office.

4. Return the voted ballot by mail or in person to the election office before 7 p.m. on election day.

In partnership with the Shawnee Mission School District, the election office is offering advance Braille ballots for visually impaired voters.

Contact the election office at 782-3441 to request an application for a Braille advance voting ballot.

Also new this year is a way to vote in advance in person at the election office. No application is needed.

The election office will be open July 17 from 8



**THING OF THE PAST?** — Lines like this one during the 1992 presidential election may be a thing of the past under Advance Voting.

Want to take part in Advance Voting? Just fill out the application on Page 15 of this guide.

a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays.

The election office is located at 2101 E. Kansas City Road, Olathe. Just take the 119th exit off I-35. On the west side of the bridge take the exit ramp to Kansas City road and head southwest toward Olathe. The election office is on the east side of the road.

For the primary, votes can be cast at the election office through noon Aug. 5.

The third way to vote is at the polls from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Aug. 6.

At the polls, voters will be asked to sign their name and then receive a slip of paper allowing them to enter the voting booth.

Visually unpaired voters may request a magnifier at the polls to help read the candidate lists in the electronic voting booth. One lens will be available at each polling place.

If voters have changed names or moved within the county since they last voted they can fill out registration cards at the polls on election day and still vote.

Voters unaffiliated with a political party can also declare as a Republican or Democrat at the polls and vote in the primary.

But, voters cannot switch parties at the polls. That must be done by re-registering before the books close July 22.

To help with informed decisions, the election office for the first time is offering biographical information about the candidates through the internet.

"We are the first in the state to have this kind of information," Schmidt said.

All candidates are listed and those who completed and returned an information form can be accessed through the election office's home page.

The data includes personal information, professional and political experience and memberships in organizations. Many include a photograph.

"You can see what they look like and see what they've done," Schmidt said.

Some candidates have linked their own home pages with the election office.

## On The Cover ...

The cover art on this Voter's Guide was designed by Tenhy Huynh, a student at Shawnee Mission Northwest High School.

Huynh submitted one of 87 designs entered in the advance voter poster contest sponsored by the election office.

Wednesday, July 17, 1996  
The Kansas City Star

# Advance voting becomes reality

Kansans now can vote  
20 days before election.

By JIM SULLINGER  
Staff Writer

To the thousands of Johnson County residents who got stuck in long lines at polling places in 1992:

It doesn't have to be that way this year. The August primary and November general elections will be the first two statewide elections in Kansas using advance voting, a procedure only seven other states allow.



Starting today — 20 days before the Aug. 6 primary — Johnson County residents can go to the election office in Olathe and vote in primary races. People also can ask the election office to send them an advance paper ballot by mail. Those ballots can be mailed back. See ADVANCE, C-6, Col. 1

C-6 Wednesday, July 17, 1996 JO  
The Kansas City Star

## JOHNSON COUNTY

# Advance voting to help shrink lines at polling places

Continued from C-1

or dropped off at the election office. That's not much different from absentee voting, which advance voting replaced.

Already, 4,061 persons have applied by mail and soon will receive an advance paper ballot. As of Wednesday, the county had 227,277 registered voters, the most in its history.

Political veterans predict that advance voting will boost voter turnout and force candidates to begin campaigning earlier.

"It's going to change a lot of people's thinking on voting," said state Rep. Rich Becker, a Lenexa Republican who wrote a book on political campaigning.

Becker said advance voting "is the most significant change in election procedure that I can remember."

In the 1992 presidential election, many Johnson County residents waited in line at polling places for more than three hours. At one Merriam precinct, 250 people were in line when the polls closed at 7 p.m. Many gave up in frustration. Angry voters demanded action.

They got it. The county and state have taken several steps to cut the wait at polling places:

■ Four years ago, Johnson County used 700 electronic voting machines, but it had to hold back

33 to count absentee votes.

Since then, the county has added 160 voting machines at \$5,300 each. And those 33 voting machines won't be held back; a new optical scanning system will read and tabulate advance paper ballots.

■ The number of precincts has been expanded from 244 to 318, meaning fewer voters at each polling place.

■ And the Kansas Legislature approved advance voting in 1995.

In 1992, avoiding long lines wasn't an option. This year it is.

"It's your choice," said Connie Schmidt, Johnson County election commissioner.

Advance voting has caught on in other states. In Colorado, 13.5 percent of the 1992 vote was cast early. In some large counties there, it accounted for as much as 25 percent of the vote.

Early voting made up one-third of the vote in many large Texas counties four years ago and up to 50 percent in a few other counties.

Other states that allow early voting are Arizona, Iowa, Nevada, Oklahoma and Tennessee.

Missouri has an absentee voting system, in which a voter must state a reason — either illness or being out of state — for voting early.

Johnson County election officials don't know how many people will vote early. The advance turnout is expected to be light for the primary

## A user's guide to advance voting in Kansas

Advance voting allows Kansans to cast ballots 20 days before an election. That period begins today for the Aug. 6 primary election. Here is a short guide to advance voting:

### Voting by mail

■ An application must be submitted for each election. Forms in Johnson County are available at city halls, libraries and voter registration sites, as well as on the Internet at <http://www.jocoelection.org>. In Wyandotte County, they can be obtained at the election office, the county courthouse and the Bonner Springs City Hall. Voters also can request an application by calling the election office: in Johnson County, 782-3441; in Wyandotte County, 334-1414.

■ After receiving the application, the election office will mail a ballot to the voter within 48 hours.

■ Mailed ballots must be returned to the election offices by mail or in person before 7 p.m. on election day. Ballots received after that won't be counted.

■ Those who forget to return their mailed ballots should take them to the polls on election day to show poll workers. This is proof they are not trying to vote twice. Officials said it must be the ballot mailed to you and not to someone else.

### Voting in person

■ Johnson County starts today. Wyandotte County begins July 30.

■ An application isn't neces-

sary for someone to vote in person, but the voter must be registered.

■ The Johnson County election office will be open for advance voting from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. The office is at 2101 E. Kansas City Road, Olathe.

■ The Wyandotte County election office will be open for advance voting from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. July 30 through Aug. 2 and from 8:30 a.m. until noon Aug. 5. The office is at 9400 State Ave., Kansas City, Kan.

■ Statewide, voting in person will end at noon Aug. 5, the day before the election.

■ The polls will be open in both counties on election day from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

election but could be heavy for the full presidential election.

"This year we're planning for the unknown," Schmidt said.

How will she keep someone from voting twice?

Schmidt said computers will record the name of each registered voter requesting an advance ballot. At the polls, an "A" will appear

after the name of those voters and tell poll workers who voted early.

Persons with an "A" after their names who try to vote at the polls will be allowed to vote a challenged ballot only. That ballot won't be counted if election workers find later that the voter had returned the mail ballot and was attempting to vote twice.

Schmidt said those who forgot to mail their advance ballots should bring them to the polls to prove they didn't vote early.

Campaign officials aren't sure what to expect from advance voting either, but they aren't taking any chances.

Many candidates began their active campaigns about three weeks

earlier than most election years. Candidates for Congress have included advance voting as parts of their strategies.

"It's a major part of our plan," said Tim Danneberg, manager for Ed Eilert's campaign in the 3rd Congressional District. "Advance voting helps us. The more people who turn out, the better Ed does."

Danneberg said Eilert started running television ads last week. He said that without advance voting, the campaign might have waited until later in the month to air those ads.

Vince Snowbarger, Eilert's main rival for the GOP nomination Aug. 6, is handing out advance voting applications when he meets voters.

Kevin Yowell, Snowbarger's campaign manager, said the size of the advance vote will be linked to the effort made by candidates rather than to any change voters made on their own.

"Most people don't know what it is," he said.

Schmidt said her office was making a big effort to educate voters.

The election office has put advance voting information on its Internet home page at <http://www.jocoelection.org>. Information also has been included in city newsletters and was included in appraisal notices mailed to homeowners at the end of February.



The Sun Newspapers July 17, 1996

# 4,000 ballots go out to county residents as advance voting begins

By Rea Wilson  
*Sun Correspondent*

Advance voting gets under way today, giving Kansas voters for the first time three ways to cast their ballots.

"We are going to have election day every day for the next 21 days," said Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt.

Starting today, ballots will be mailed to more than 4,000 registered voters who previously submitted applications. Voters may continue to apply for ballots through Aug. 2.

Also today, voters can go to the election office in Olathe to cast ballots in person. In person advance voting continues through noon Aug. 5.

The third way to vote is at the polls from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Aug. 6.

Everyone who is registered to vote is eligible to vote in advance, Schmidt said. No excuses are required to cast ballots before election day, she said.

Persons who are already on the election rolls as having a permanent disability do not have to reapply for a mailed ballot.

To vote in the primary, residents must be registered to vote by July 22.

As of Monday, the election office had received 4,061 applications for mailed ballots. After an application form was printed in The Sun Voter's Guide last Friday, nearly 500 applications arrived in Monday's mail and more were in the mail Tuesday.

Applications for advance voting by

mail are also available at libraries, city halls, voter registration sites, the election office and on the Internet. Voters can also call the election office at 782-3441 to request an application.

Visually impaired voters can request a Braille mailed ballot by contacting the election office.

Applications should be mailed to the Johnson County Election Office, 2101 E. Kansas City Road, Olathe, KS 66061.

No application is needed to vote in person. To reach the election office, take I-35 to the 119th Street exit and head west. Immediately west of the overpass over the interstate turn right on a ramp to Kansas City Road. Turn right again on Kansas City Road and head southwest. The election office is on the east side of the road.

The election office will be open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday from now until the election.

When voters go to the election office to vote in advance in person they will fill out a short form and then receive a paper ballot printed by a computer.

For the primary election, voters must be affiliated with either the Republican or Democratic parties. Voters cannot switch parties without re-registering, but independent voters can declare an affiliation when they vote.

WEDNESDAY

JULY 17, 1996

THE OLATHE  
**DAILY**  
**NEWS**

TIMOTHY P. O'DONNELL, PUBLISHER

SCOTT SMITH, GENERAL MANAGER

LAIRD MACGREGOR, MANAGING EDITOR

GERALD HAY, CITY EDITOR

## No excuses

### ■ Advance voting begins today, eliminating yet another reason not to get in on process

In case you missed it, the polls opened today across Kansas for the Aug. 6 primary election.

Confused?

A recent change in state law has brought advance voting to Kansas, and the concept is in use for the first time during this primary season. Advance voting not only provides voters an opportunity to get a head start on participating in elections, but also allows them to make their selections in the privacy of their own homes: at the kitchen table, in the easy chair in front of the television, wherever. When the ballot is complete, the voter then can simply drop it in the mail.

It sounds simple, and it is. And it eliminates yet another excuse, albeit a rather weak one, for not participating in the political process: With advance voting, you needn't worry about waiting in long lines to cast your ballot.

The process, in case you weren't aware or have simply forgotten, is just this: Registered voters can pick up

applications for advance voting at any city hall, public library or voter registration site in the county, as well as at the Johnson County Election Commission Office in Olathe and, for net surfers, on the World Wide Web at <http://www.jocoelection.org>; when your ballot comes in the mail, fill it out at your leisure, though it must be turned in by 7 p.m. on Aug. 6. Advance voting may also be done in person at the election commission office, though the deadline is noon on Aug. 5.


And if you don't happen to be registered to vote in the Aug. 6 primary, you may still do so through Monday. You can register at any city hall or public library, or call the election commission office, 782-3441, for additional registration sites and information.

It's hard to imagine how anyone could have ever considered voting a difficult proposition, and now it's even easier.

No excuses. Register and vote.

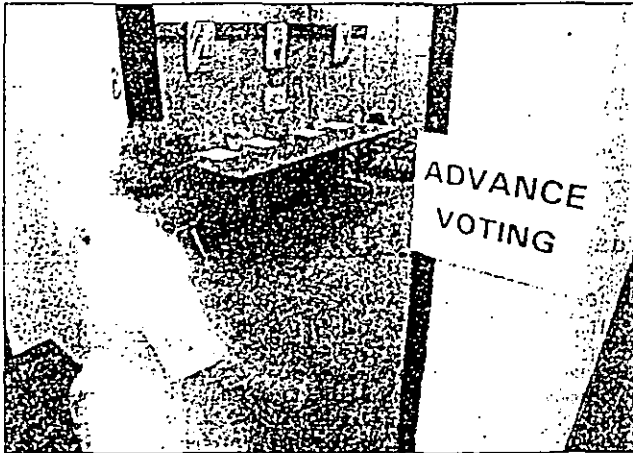
— Laird MacGregor

WEDNESDAY  
 AUGUST 6, 1995



HIGH ..... 93  
 LOW ..... 72

# THE OLATHE DAILY NEWS



Mark Lettingwell/The Daily News

The Johnson County Election Commission has set aside a room at its Olathe office for voters who wish to use advance voting in the Aug. 6 primary.

## Primary election begins today

### Advance voting makes its debut across Kansas

Gerald Hay  
 City Editor

Advance voting has come to Johnson County, beginning today.

Voters now have three ways to cast ballots in the upcoming Aug. 6 primary election: they can vote in advance by mail; they can wait until primary election day to do their voting with the possibility of waiting in line at the voting sites; or, they can take advantage of the newest way to vote by going to the Johnson County Election Office, 2101 E. Kansas City Road, and vote advance in person.

"The message is that it's their choice," County Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt said Tuesday.

The Aug. 6 primary election is the first time for advance voting in person in Johnson County. The Kansas Legislature approved a bill that became effective July 1, 1995, to expand voting places and ways to register to vote. The state action came on the heels of the National Voter Registration Act established by Congress in 1993.

Two of the voting options — advance voting by mail or in person — become available today, which is 20 days prior to the primary election day.

Both methods require completion of an application for advance voting. Applications are available at the election office, city halls,

public libraries and at other voter registration sites.

A separate application must be completed for each election.

Ballots received through the mail must be returned to the election office, either by mail or in person, before 7 p.m. election day.

Voters wanting to use advance voting in person can do so only at the election office, which has expanded its hours to better accommodate the schedules of voters. The office will be open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday until election day when the polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 7 p.m.

The deadline for voting in person at the election office is noon Aug. 5.

■ See ADVANCE, Page 2A

Tuesday, August 6, 1996  
The Kansas City Star

## Early voting gets warm welcome

**Kansas officials are pleased with amount of advance ballots.**

By JIM SULLINGER  
Staff Writer

The numbers are in, and advance voting looks like a hit in Kansas.

"With little to no marketing for the primary, we've had over 40,000 people cast ballots in Kansas as of last Friday," Kansas Secretary of State Ron Thorn-

burgh said Monday.

That's up 50 percent from the number of absentee ballots cast in the primary election two years ago, he said.

"It's doing what it was intended to do, and that is increase voter turnout," Thornburgh said.

Sedgwick County mailed more than 4,000 advance ballots and Shawnee County 3,500. But the biggest advance voting effort can be found in Johnson County, where it appears that more than

See ADVANCE, B-8, Col. 1

B-8 The Kansas City Star Tuesday, August 6, 1996 JO

# Advance balloting in Kansas exceeds expectations

Continued from B-1

10,000 votes were placed in advance.

Depending on today's turnout, Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt said, advance voting could account for 16 percent to 21 percent of the total vote.

Schmidt is predicting a 40 percent overall turnout for today's election, a high percentage for a primary election in Johnson Coun-

ty. If that level is achieved, 61,691 registered Republicans and Democrats will have voted by the time the polls close at 7 p.m. today.

Advance voting began July 17. More than 13,000 voters applied for advance ballots, Schmidt said.

Of the 10,000 advance votes received, about 2,500 people voted in person at the election commission office in Olathe.

"This exceeds my expectation for the primary," Schmidt said. "I have

a feeling we'll meet my 50 percent projection" for the Nov. 5 general election.

This is Kansas' first statewide election with advance voting. Seven other states have advance voting. Missouri does not.

Advance voting is a more liberal form of the state's old absentee voting system. To vote absentee, a voter had to either be ill or out of the area on election day. With advance voting, no excuse is needed.

The largest absentee vote ever recorded in Johnson County was 12,800 in the 1992 presidential election, Schmidt said. In that election, 58 percent of all registered voters cast ballots.

Election officials in Wyandotte and Leavenworth counties said advance voting was exceeding the amount of absentee voting in previous elections but was short of Johnson County's percentage.

In Wyandotte County, advance

voting could account for 5 percent to 10 percent of the total vote if the turnout is 40 percent.

The county had 1,989 requests for advance ballots. Election officials expected the actual number of advance votes to reach 1,000 by the end of Monday.

Area election officials say some people who received an advance ballot may have forgotten to mail it back. Schmidt said those people have until 7 p.m. today to get them

to her office.

They still could vote at their usual polling place, but Schmidt said they should bring their unused advance ballot with them.

Voters who requested an advance ballot will have an "A" after their name on the precinct voter rolls. If they try to vote at the polls, they will get a "provisional" paper ballot. But if those voters can produce their unused advance ballot, they will be allowed to vote.

The Sun Newspapers August 7, 1996

# Advance voting is a great innovation

## PERSONAL VIEW

Jack  
Lovelace  
*Editor*



Advance voting was a pleasure.

I sent in the form that ran in The Sun Voter's Guide earlier this month requesting a ballot. A

ballot came a day after the voting period began.

It was nice to sit down and mull candidates over without having to stand in line, or stand behind a curtain with a time limit trying to make decisions.

You can vote in some races. Do some research and vote in more. Think over an undecided race for a while and then come back to it. What a nice way to vote.

Not everybody agrees. One voter wrote The Sun to tell about how much they *hate* advance voting. An interesting sidelight to advance voting is, as

the writer put it, "the electioneering doesn't stop and I feel left out."

It does feel strange to see and hear and read the ads and get the literature after it's too late to have any effect.

But as advance voting catches on we'll see more and more early campaigning.

As for the fears expressed by one person of changing their mind after they've already voted, I see it just the opposite. I like the idea of not being able to do anything about last minute slurs and slams that always come in the fevered final days in some races. If enough of us ad-

vance vote, maybe they'll even calm down in the homestretch.

November will bring a huge turnout in Johnson County. Without advance voting the lines would be even longer than four years ago when the last presidential election had people in line for hours, ordering out for pizza in some cases.

It's nice to know that I can avoid all of that with great ease in November, and forevermore.

I believe I have visited my last polling place.

Advance voting will do just fine until I can do it on the home computer.

# Over 20,000 apply to vote in advance

By Rea Wilson  
*Sun Correspondent*

Applications for mail ballots are flowing in by the hundreds to the Johnson County Election Office.

More than 21,000 applications have been received, and hundreds more arrive in the mail daily, said Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt.

"They are coming in quickly," she said.

Schmidt and her staff have delivered applications for advance voting ballots to every apartment complex in the county and have also targeted the top 40 employers, Schmidt said.

"We are promoting advance voting as much as we can," she said.

Schmidt predicted that 50,000 to 60,000 people in Johnson County would vote in advance next month, or about 25 percent of the registered voters.

In the August primary, about 12,000 people voted in advance, the largest number in the state.

Schmidt hoped advance voting would eliminate long lines at polling places. In the 1992 presidential election year voters in several precincts waited hours to cast ballots.

Schmidt has targeted the largest precincts where more than 1,000 people are registered to vote. Overland Park has 18; Olathe has nine; Shawnee has four; Leawood has two; and Prairie Village, Lenexa, Mission, Gardner, Lexington and Oxford townships each have one.

On the Monday before the election, Schmidt will know how many people in each of these large precincts are voting in ad-

vance.

If the numbers are not great, she plans to send portable voting booths with paper ballots to those sites to handle the crowds.

Advance voting became law in Kansas this year. It replaces absentee balloting. No excuses are required to vote in advance, Schmidt said.

Voters have two choices on advance voting. They can vote by mail or in person, starting 20 days before the election.

Starting Wednesday, Oct. 16, the election office will be open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday for people who want to vote in advance in person. No application is needed. Walk-in voting will cut off at noon Nov. 4, the Monday before the election.

The election office is located at 2101 E. Kansas City Road, just south of 119th Street on the west side of I-35.

Also starting Oct. 16, the election office will begin mailing ballots to people who have applied.

Applications for mail ballots can be made until the Friday before the Nov. 5 election. Applications are available at registration sites, city halls, public libraries and through the election office. Or call 782-3441 or use the Internet home page at <http://www.jocoelection.org>.

All mail ballots must be returned to the election office by 7 p.m. Nov. 5.

On Election Day, the polls will open at 6 a.m. and remain open until 7 p.m. People in line at 7 p.m. will be allowed to vote.

## Early voters can avoid a long line

Steve Porter

Daily News Reporter

If you were outraged four years ago at having to wait in line up to four hours to cast your ballot in Johnson County, you may only have yourself to blame if it happens again this year.

Those clogged polling places during the 1992 general election, and the frustration that they caused, has prompted the Kansas Legislature to allow for advanced voting 20 days prior to election day. This will be the first presidential election that advance voting will be implemented.

Johnson County Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt hopes advance voting, which begins Wednesday, will take pressure off precinct polling places Nov. 5. So far, it appears as though voters are willing to cooperate. In Johnson County alone, some 22,751 requests for advance ballots have come in by Monday, she said.

"Anything you can do to promote advance voting alleviates long lines on election day," Schmidt said. If the turnout of voters is anything like the 85 percent typical for presidential elections, voting ahead of the herd could prevent a lot of frustration, even with a record number of registered voters ready to cast ballots.

As of Monday, 240,041 people have registered to vote in Johnson County, the most registered voters in any Kansas county. In November 1992, some 197,265 voters were registered. Voter registration deadline for the Nov. 5 general election is next Monday, Oct. 21.

"If they wait until after 5 p.m. on election day to vote, chances are they will have to stand in line," Schmidt said. "Most people vote between 5 and 7, after they get off work."

While there will be 55 more voting places, 147 more voting machines and dozens of more poll workers this year than four years ago, Schmidt doesn't think that the added machines and polling places alone would solve the crush late on election day.

For those who want to cast their ballots now and relax on election day, it is a simple process. First, you must be a registered voter, although you may register anytime up until Oct. 21 and vote in advance at the same time if you wish.

Advance voters must request a ballot, either in person, by mail or by fax at <http://www.jocoelection.org>. You can call the Johnson County Election Commission office at 782-3441 and ask that an advance ballot request form be sent out by mail or facsimile, but you must return that application either in person or by mail with your signature to receive an official ballot. You can only request an advance ballot for yourself.

You may obtain advance ballot applications or register to vote at city halls, public libraries, Multi-service centers, the Johnson Coun-

ty Clerk's office, the Northeast Office or the Johnson County Election Commission office at 2101 E. Kansas City Road. The Election Office will be open from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays up until the day before election day.

When you have received your advance ballot, you can vote at your leisure. Be sure to sign the outside envelope and either mail it back to the Election Commission office or return it in person no later than 7 p.m. on election day.

Advance voters also can cast their ballots at the Johnson County Election Commission office at the same time they request the ballot.

Johnson County voters already have tested the advance voting feature this year. Of the 228,956 registered to vote in the primary, 72,571 cast ballots. Some 12,662 advance ballots were requested for the primary election.

Schmidt said that, for those who still don't want to cast advance ballots, polls will open an hour earlier for the presidential election only. Polls open at 6 a.m. and close at 7 p.m. Nov. 5.

# Taking the Pain out of November

## County looks to advance voting to prevent repeat of '92 election's long lines

By Rea Wilson  
Sun Correspondent

Under the shadow of long voting lines in the 1992 presidential election, Johnson County Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt is working hard to take the pain out of voting this November.

"We are trying to take as much of the trauma away from Election Day as possible," Schmidt said.

To this end, Schmidt has battle plans in place to help eliminate the long voting lines by encouraging advance voting and to accommodate precincts where more than 1,000 people are registered to vote.

Johnson County voters can choose one of three ways to vote this year. They can vote by mail ballot, vote in advance in person at the Election Office, or they can go to the polls between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. Nov. 5.

Based on past presidential contests, Schmidt expects at least 85 percent of the registered voters to cast ballots this year.

"Right now that would be 210,000 people. It's a major event," Schmidt said.

In 1992, 88.5 percent of the voters turned out, some waiting hours to cast their ballots.

If you stand in line to vote this year, it's your choice, Schmidt said.

Schmidt encouraged Johnson County voters to avoid the lines this year by taking advantage of advance voting.

"We are promoting advance voting as much as we can," Schmidt said.

Ballots will start going in the mail today. Also starting today, voters can go in person to the Election Office, 2101 E. Kansas City Road, Olathe, to cast their ballots Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and on Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

As of Oct. 7, more than 20,000 people had already applied for advance voting ballots. The deadline to apply for a ballot is the Friday before the election.

In the August primary, about 12,000 people chose to use advance voting, the largest number in any Kansas county.

All registered voters are eligible for advance voting. They do not need an excuse as in the past, such as being out of town on election day or ill or otherwise unable to get to the polls.

Here's how to vote in advance.

1. Make sure you are registered to vote. Registration closes Oct. 21. You may register to vote if you are a U.S. citizen, a Kansas resident and at least 18 years old.

Registration forms are available at city halls, public libraries, high schools, and other sites throughout the county.

You may also request forms to register by mail by calling the Election Office, 782-3441, or through the Election Office home page, <http://www.jocoelection.org>.

2. Pick up an advance voting application. There is a copy of the application in this Voter's Guide. Cut it out and copy it for other family members, friends and co-workers. Applications are also available at the election office, city halls, public libraries, voter registration sites and on the In-



**NOT SO CROWDED THIS TIME** — People weren't exactly using voting booths three at a time in 1992 (though a few moms did take in their kids), but there were a number of long lines in the last presidential election in Johnson County, and the Election Office is promoting Advance Voting as a way to cut the long lines down this November.

## On The Cover

The artwork on the cover of today's Voters Guide was created by Aaron Fruehling, Merriam, a senior at Shawnee Mission North High School.

Aaron was the second-place winner in the poster contest sponsored by the Johnson County Election Office.

He received a \$200 prize.

ternet.

If you voted in advance in August, you still must submit a separate application for the November election, Schmidt said.

Mail the application to the election office, 2101 E. Kansas City Road, Olathe, KS 66061. The forms cannot be faxed. State law requires the election commission to have your original signature on the application.

In partnership with the Shawnee Mission School District, the election office is offering advance Braille ballots for visually impaired voters.

Contact the election office to request an application for a Braille mail ballot.

3. Starting 20 days before the election — Oct. 16 for this election — the election office will start mailing out ballots.

4. The ballots must be returned to the election office by 7 p.m. Nov. 5 to be counted.

5. No application is needed to vote in advance in person at the election office.

To reach the election office, take the 119th Street exit off I-35. On the west side of the bridge, take the exit ramp to Kansas City Road and head southwest toward Olathe. The election office is on the east side of the road.

Ballots can be cast at the election office through noon Nov. 4.

The traditional way to vote will be at the polls. Schmidt has plans in place to deal with long lines should they develop.

First, polls will be open an hour earlier than in the past. Voters can cast ballots starting at 6 a.m. The doors to the polling places will close at 7 p.m., but voters already in line will be allowed to vote after that time.

Schmidt has targeted 25 precincts with more than 1,000 registered voters and can deploy voting booths with paper ballots to those sites to handle overflow crowds.

In addition, the election office is recruiting high school volunteers to help at each polling place from 4 p.m. until closing on Election Day.

These teen-agers will greet voters, point out the sample ballots and help the election judges as needed.

Visually impaired voters may request a magnifier at the polls to help read the candidate lists. One lens will be available at each polling place.

If voters have changed names or moved within the county since they last voted, they can fill out registration cards at the polls on Election Day and still vote.

To help with informed decisions, the election office is offering biographical information about the candidates through the Internet.

All candidates are listed and those who completed and returned an information form can be accessed through the home page. This data includes personal information, professional and political experience and membership in organizations. Many include a photograph.



## Advance ballots are counted cautiously

The Johnson County election office on Thursday will begin the electronic counting of more than 60,000 advance ballots.

But how secure is this count? How can we be sure there is no election fraud with advance voting? Will information on how a candidate is doing be leaked to campaigns? What's to keep someone from voting more than once?



Election Commissioner Connie Schmidt has the answers:

The post office delivers the sealed advanced ballots, and they are stored in a locked room. Only the election commissioner and a supervising judge have keys.

The advance voting election board is made up of 12 persons — Democrats and Republicans — and the supervising judge.

Four teams of election workers handle each ballot.

First, election workers check the back of the envelope to make sure it is signed by the voter. They check to make sure the name is the same as the name on the mailing label.

These unopened ballots then go

to a second team of workers at a computer and bar code scanner. The fact that you voted — but not how you voted — is now entered into the election computer system. This is the point at which someone trying to vote twice would be caught.

It has been tested, and it works.

A third team actually opens the envelope, and a fourth team removes and flattens the ballot. It is then run through a scanner, and the vote is stored electronically in the advance ballot computer system.

At this point, Schmidt said, no one knows how the candidates are doing.

Paper ballot votes at the election commission office are scanned along with the mail-in ballots.

If the advance ballot envelope is not signed on the back, the vote won't be counted. The ballot must get to the election commission office before the polls close at 7 p.m. Tuesday. A ballot with a Tuesday postmark delivered Wednesday won't count.

After 7 p.m. election night, the advance ballot totals stored in the computer will be downloaded to the main election computer and counted with the polling place totals.

Schmidt had to get the Legislature to approve a bill earlier this year to allow her to begin processing the advance ballots before elec-

tion day. Three scanners, each of which can count 3,500 ballots an hour, will be used.

### Campaign trail

Johnson County Republicans are holding a rally for Bob Dole and Jack Kemp at 9 a.m. Saturday in the parking lot of the Valley View Shopping Center at 95th Street and Antioch Road in Overland Park.

Although Dole and Kemp won't be there, GOP Senate candidates Pat Robert and Sam Brownback are expected to attend, along with congressional candidate Vince Snowbarger and state school board candidate Linda Holloway.

The League of Women Voters of Johnson County is offering online voter guides. Information on candidates can be reached on the Internet at <http://www.kspress.com/sunco/filings.html>.

Democratic congressional candidate Judy Hancock has received the endorsement of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, an organization based in Washington. She is expected to receive the endorsement today of Carol Marinovich, mayor of Kansas City, Kan.

The one-hour debate held last week on the Union Station sales tax proposal will be rebroadcast at

7 p.m. today on TCI cable Channel 3A. It will air again at 7 p.m. Thursday and 9 p.m. Saturday.

The debate features Steve Rose, head of Sun Publications, and state Rep. Gary Merritt, an Overland Park Republican.

Democrats will hold a victory party at 7 election night at their Johnson County headquarters, 7327 W. 79th St., about three blocks west of Metcalf Avenue in Overland Park.

The Kansas Taxpayer Network said recently it has pulled the plug on Democratic Senate candidate Brad Russell's taxpayer protection pledge.

Those who take the pledge promise to vote against all efforts to increase taxes and "fees or other charges which are really taxes in disguise."

After signing the pledge, Russell advocated the use of higher sales taxes to replace lost revenue from a cut in property taxes. He also advocated higher cigarette taxes to increase funding for public schools.

Russell of Olathe is running against Olathe Republican Karin Brownlee in the 23rd Senate District.

Russell said raising one tax to lower another would not be a tax increase, and he believes he has not violated his pledge.