

In case you didn't know....IT'S ELECTION SEASON!

Terri Turi, CCC, Coos County Clerk

Every two years electors have the opportunity to participate in the Oregon Primary Election, held in the even-numbered year on the third Tuesday in May. This year Oregon's Primary Election is May 17, 2016.

New to us this election is a new vote tally system. It is called Clear Ballot and is made up of two components: 1) Clear Design – the program by which we design and layout the ballots for Coos County; and 2) Clear Count – the program which tallies the votes for the various contests on the ballot. The Clear Ballot system is now being used by 7 counties within the state of Oregon, resulting in the majority of Oregon voters voting on ballots from Clear Ballot. We are looking forward to continued accurate success with this innovative, state of the art system.

The Primary Election always brings interesting questions and discussions. Here are a few explanations to some popular topics about the upcoming Primary Election:

1. No one in Oregon will receive ALL of the candidates on their Primary ballot

Voters who are registered as a member of the Democrat, Republican or Independent party will receive a ballot that includes all nominating candidates for that specific party, along with all nonpartisan contests. Voters registered in any of the minor parties or as a non-affiliated voter (not a member of a political party) will receive a ballot for the primary election that includes the nonpartisan contests **ONLY**.

The Independent Party, now a major party in Oregon, has opened their nomination process to non-affiliated voters giving them the opportunity to request an Independent Party ballot for this Primary Election only. The Oregon Secretary of State's office sent postcards out to all non-affiliated voters with this information notifying them to request this ballot in writing from the local election office by **April 26, 2016**. A person registered as an Independent is NOT the same thing as a person registered as a non-affiliated voter.

April 26, 2016 is also the deadline for any other political party changes and for registrations for those electors new to the state of Oregon. One can register to vote or update their current registration by returning a voter registration card to the Election office at the courthouse in Coquille, or online at www.oregonvotes.gov. One can also find this link on our Coos County Election website.

2. Ballots in the Mail – April 29, 2016

Coos County ballots will be taken to the Coquille Post Office on Friday, April 29th. Voters who do not receive a ballot through the mail by Friday, May 6 should call the Election office at 541-396-7610.

Ballots are NOT FORWARDABLE. Therefore, if an elector has moved or changed a mailing address most likely their ballot will be returned to us as undeliverable. It is very important that electors update their voter registration with current address or name change information.

3. Voters Pamphlets

The Voter's Pamphlet is produced and printed by the Oregon Secretary of State's office and will be delivered one per residential household between April 20 – 23, 2016. If one is not received, the post offices have additional copies. The Voter's Pamphlet may also be viewed online at <http://sos.oregon.gov/voting-elections/Pages/default.aspx>. It is the candidate's choice whether or not to submit a statement in the Voter's Pamphlet for a fee. Coos County does not produce a voter's pamphlet.

4. “ Why did I receive two ballots?”

If an elector changes their party close to the registration deadline, they may receive two ballots. Ballot packets are assembled for mailing prior to the registration deadline because of volume. Only one ballot will count. The first ballot is inactivated when the second ballot is issued.

5. Write-In votes

Write-in votes will not be tallied on Election Day. The abstracting process for determining all the various write-in names will begin the day following Election Day and continue until completed. It is anticipated that those results will be released at the same time the election is certified – by June 6, 2016.

When there is a candidate listed on a contest, the write-in votes are only abstracted for names if the total number of write-ins equal or exceeds the votes for the listed candidate.

Per OAR 165-007-0030, the Vote By Mail Procedures Manual, misspelling or abbreviations of the names of write-in candidates are disregarded by the Election Board if it can be ascertained from the ballot for whom the vote was intended. A first initial is not sufficient, but an abbreviated version of a first name is allowed (example: Bob for Robert).

Other notable items and reminders:

- Election Day is Tuesday, May 17, 2016. Ballots must be returned to the office either through an official drop box or through the mail by 8:00 PM on Election Day.
- We encourage voters to use the official drop sites after Wednesday, May 11th to ensure their ballot is received by the election office.
- A list of official drop sites throughout the county will be included within the election packet each voter will receive and can be found on the county's election web page at <http://www.co.coos.or.us/Departments/CountyClerk/Elections.aspx>
- THERE WILL NOT BE A DROP BOX LOCATED AT THE NORTH BEND POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR THIS ELECTION
- Remember to sign the back of the return identification envelope before submitting your voted ballot
- Please be sure to vote and sign YOUR OWN ballot/return ID envelope and not another person's in your household
- When returning ballots through the mail – POSTMARKS DO NOT COUNT. So plan to mail no later than May 11th with a 47 cent stamp.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about your registration, your ballot, or about the election process in general, please stop by the election office or give us a call at 541-396-7610 or 541-396-7608.