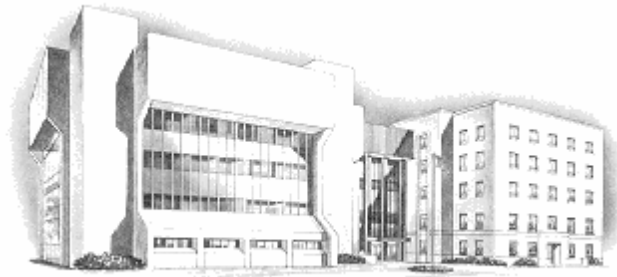


JOYCE HUDMAN
COUNTY CLERK
111 E. Locust, Suite 200
Angleton, Texas 77515



DEBORAH PAYNE
Chief Deputy

BRAZORIA COUNTY
ANGLETON, TEXAS 77515

TO: ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS

FROM: JOYCE HUDMAN
COUNTY CLERK, BRAZORIA COUNTY

RE: VOTING CENTER PILOT PROGRAM

In 2005, the Texas Legislature passed House Bill 758, requiring the Secretary of State to establish a pilot program for the November 7, 2006 general election for state and county offices. These counties would conduct Election Day voting at countywide voting locations (also termed "super precincts" or "voting centers"). Voting Centers means that voters will be able to cast their ballot at any of the countywide polling places on Election Day. Potential participants in the pilot program were limited to counties which use direct recording electronic (DRE) voting systems and provide real time voter registration systems at each polling place.

In November, 2006, Lubbock County was the only participant in the pilot program and the concept was well received by the county officials and the voters of the county. Lubbock did a "wonderful" job in this pilot program and submitted its reports and findings to the Texas Legislature last session. The Texas Legislature in turn passed House Bill 3105 requiring the Secretary of State to implement a pilot program to evaluate use of countywide Election Day polling places in the November 4, 2008 general election for state and county offices and countywide elections held on May 10, 2008 uniform election day.

Brazoria County would like to apply to participate in the pilot program for the November 4, 2008 General Election. In order to be considered by the Secretary of State's Office to participate in this program, we must first meet three special requirements:

Requirement No. 1: To participate in this program the county must have all DRE's for voting on Election Day.

Brazoria County has met this requirement.

Requirement No. 2: To participate in the program the county must be on a real time voter registration system. That means that when a person votes at one of the voting centers it is recorded, **at that time**, in the county voter registrar's system that is networked into the county's main office. If that voter appears at a different voting center and attempts to vote a second time, the countywide voter registration would immediately indicate in the system that they have already voted.

At this time, the county's information system department is working on a program that will allow us to be on real time. **IF WE DO NOT GET A REAL TIME VOTERS REGISTRATION SYSTEM, WE WILL NOT QUALIFY OR APPLY TO BE IN THE PROGRAM.**

Requirement No. 3: House Bill 3105 requires that we hold public hearings to inform and solicit opinions from voters and interested parties on participation in the program.

It is at this point that we are in need of assistance from the governing bodies of all political subdivisions in Brazoria County. We have already met with the Democratic and Republican Parties and each approved a proclamation of support for the voting center pilot program. We would like for each political subdivision in Brazoria County to provide us with a proclamation of "support" or "opposition" to this voting center program as well. I have attached a copy of a sample order or proclamation that may be used for this purpose.

At this time, we do not know if we will qualify for the pilot program or have the county's support for the program. With your help, we can start initiating the process to meet the qualifications that would allow us to participate in this program. We would need the proclamations from all governing bodies by the end of February, 2008. Public hearings would be scheduled to present the proclamations to the Commissioner's Court. We may ask that some representatives attend the hearing to verbally express their opinions.

Other information we can provide about the voting center pilot program:

Once we have completed the first three requirements we would formally apply to the Secretary of State's Office for acceptance to the program. This must be completed by April 30, 2008.

The Secretary of State's Office has until May 30, 2008 to notify counties of their acceptance.

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Voting Centers

Once accepted into the program, we would appoint a site selection committee which would help in the selection of the voting center locations and assist in selecting the criteria for the locations. These would include, large meeting rooms or the space to set up, sufficient parking and that are ADA compliant. We are allowed to reduce the number of voting locations to no less than half of our existing 70 precincts. Lubbock County' selection committee included:

Two County Commissioners
Republican Party Chair
Democratic Party Chair
Assistant District Attorney – Civil Division
Managing Attorney for Advocacy, Inc.
Election Staff

Once the sites are selected, we would publish the locations and consider holding public hearings to announce the voting sites.

If Brazoria County is accepted to participate, we must submit a plan for the pilot program to the Secretary of State by July 18, 2008. The Secretary of State would review our plan and give us the final approval that we are accepted or denied. August 23, 2008 is the final date for Brazoria County to submit our plan for the local pilot program to the Department of Justice for pre-clearance.

We realize this is a lot of information as well as a new concept for voting, but we ask that you keep an open mind. My staff and I are available anytime to answer any questions and are prepared to attend counsel meetings as necessary.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Joyce Hudman, County Clerk
Brazoria County, Texas

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