



Mark S. Earley

Leon County Supervisor of Elections

Summer 2017: June-July 2017

Election News and Information for Florida's Capital County

A Very Busy Spring

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Mark S. Earley
Supervisor of Elections

This year is shaping up to be another with very little "down time". Your Leon County Supervisor of Elections Office has had several key areas that we have been focused on this spring; primary among them have been the 2017 Legislative Session with many important elections bills on the agenda,

the final phase of the Consolidated Elections Center construction, the formulation of the 2017/18 Elections Budget, and last but certainly not least, ongoing staff training and certification. While several of these topics will be covered more in depth throughout this newsletter, let me briefly discuss each with you.

The **2017 Legislative Session** was marked by substantial wrangling between both houses of the Legislature, as well as disagreements between the Governor's Office and the Legislature. As always, budget fights at the state level took center stage. Within that context, several very important elections bills were presented. Some of the key pieces of legislation I was advocating for included:

- Restoration of Voting Rights for felons who have successfully and fully completed their court-ordered sentencing;
- Changes in election law to allow our locally designed Automated Independent Audit system to be used for accurate, transparent, and efficient election recounts;
- Protection of the personal data of our pre-registered 16 and 17 year-olds from public disclosure;
- Curing Vote By Mail ballots with missing signatures or signatures that do not match what we have on file (this problem disproportionately affects our elderly voting population).

I believe all of these bills would have brought significant improvements to the lives of our voters and to the elections process as a whole; however, only the last one in the list made it through this contentious session. It is still awaiting the Governor's signature to become law.

Construction at the Voting Operations Center at the corner of Apalachee Parkway and Capital Circle SE is ongoing and nearing completion. This is the final phase of consolidating our elections administration and operational functions under one roof. Many years of planning, design, budgeting, and construction are finally coming together, and we look forward to having our entire team serving together in a more efficient and comprehensive manner as elections grow ever more complicated to administer in the future. We anticipate a move in date of mid-July.

As many of you are aware, the spring months are a time for **budget planning**. All members of our staff had input into the budget, and it has been a personal learning experience for myself as my staff and I bring FY2017/18 budget to completion. I could not have done this without help from everyone on my team, but most significantly the advice, hard work, and long hours put in by Holly Thompson and Chris Moore were critical to our success.

So, it has been a very busy several months since our last newsletter. All of our focus is on improvements that will allow us to continue the tradition of successful, accurate, and transparent elections in 2018 and beyond. In this age of increasingly sophisticated threats to all aspects of elections, it is important that your vote is accurately tabulated and protected. Our democracy only works when the will of the people is fulfilled, and my job is to protect your vote and your voice in that process.

Finally, let me add a sincere "thank you!" to the tremendous team of elections professionals that have come together during this transition from the tenure of Supervisor Sancho to my own. Change is never an easy undertaking, and the uncertainty accompanying the inevitable change in leadership style has been met with grace and professionalism, for which I am very thankful.



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Chris' Corner: Staff Pursues Excellence Through Training and Certification.



Chris Moore
Deputy Supervisor of Elections

We often are asked what we do in an “off election year”. One of the key things we do is send staff to election-based training classes and pursue or renew certifications. The two elections certification programs in Florida are:

- Certified Election/Registration Administrator (CERA) certification sponsored by the national Election Center and
- Florida Certified Election Professional (FCEP) program sponsored by our Florida State Association of Supervisor of Elections (FSASE).

The Certified Election/Registration Administrator (CERA) certification is a nationally recognized Professional Education Program administered by the Election Center. The Election Center has partnered with Auburn University to create a unique program that helps educate election staff from across the United States on topics such as civil rights, elections law, technology and American history; all of which are critical knowledge areas in our field. The opportunity to share best practices with other election administrators is a key aspect of these workshops. Currently Leon County has six CERA graduates on staff. More information about this program is available at electioncenter.org.

The Florida Certified Election Professional (FCEP) is a Florida-centric program managed by our state association. Classes take place in Orlando and are taught by other Supervisors of Elections, tenured SOE staff or industry experts in the subject area of the course. Classes are shorter in length than the CERA content, but cover a broader range of topics and are all Florida specific. We expect that in Spring 2018 or 2019 (depending on the offerings) we will graduate our first SOE staff member through the FCEP program, which consists of 33 classes across 3 subject groupings. More information is available online at the FSASE website.

First question: Why is staff training important?

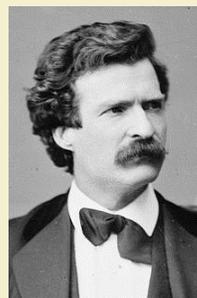
The elections industry is no different from other careers in that things constantly evolve. Changes in legislation, rulings from court cases and reacting to the your community's needs are all external factors that require

compliance. Considering the constant change that occurs outside of your control, it helps to pursue stability inside the office. We strive make elections a professional career for our staff, not just a job. A talented, effective staff is built upon a progressive path of experience, participation and increasing responsibility. It also has to be inclusive to all areas of your team, not just the managers.

Second question: How does a well trained SOE staff help the voters of Leon County?

Continuity, adaptation and innovation. There is nothing more disruptive in elections than change. Redistricting. Polling location changes. New voting equipment. Party changes before a Primary (ask our poll workers about that one). One of the key challenges is finding balance. You are forced to adapt, but how much change can voters handle? At what point does it lead to confusion? You need an experienced, confident staff to train election workers, develop and implement new programs and technology.

I'll give you two relevant examples of how a well-trained, experienced staff can make a difference. When implementing new technology, you typically have many choices regarding how and when to deploy solutions. Recently we have deployed new voting machines and electronic pollbooks in Leon County. That is a massive change in procedures that had been in place for decades. The new voting machines were specifically introduced in a Gubernatorial election year (2014) when turnout is not as robust as in a Presidential Election and the electronic pollbooks were phased in over two election cycles (2014 and 2016). We arrived at these decisions after much contemplation and some of our ideas were formed from conversations we had with other practitioners while attending the programs mentioned in this article.



“There is no such thing as a new idea. It is impossible. We simply take a lot of old ideas and put them into a sort of mental kaleidoscope. We give them a turn and they make new and curious combinations. We keep on turning and making new combinations indefinitely; but they are the same old pieces of colored glass that have been in use through all the ages.”

- Samuel L. Clemens (better known as Mark Twain)



Election Worker News

Our memories are the corner stone of our life, but as we get older it becomes more difficult to remember details. Our memories consist of both short-term memory and long-term memory. Being a poll worker exercises both short-term memory (races on this ballot) and long-term memory (how to turn on a voting machine).

Memory training can be as simple as playing games. Knowing how different games can assist in specific memory training is key.

Contextual Memory is remembering the source and circumstance of a memory. For example, someone tells you a story and you know you have heard it before. You search your memory and remember that Bill told you the same story a few years ago. A great game to train this memory is working a jigsaw puzzle.

Working Memory is the remembering information temporarily needed for a complex task. Sudoku is a great game but when it gets too easy try something new. Keep it challenging.



Cool Summer Treats Lemon Syrup Cake with Berries and Lemon- Curd Cream

Ingredients

Curd

- 1 cup plus 2 tbsp sugar
- 3/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
- 2 1/2 tbsp grated lemon peel
- 3 large eggs

Syrup

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup fresh lemon juice

Cake

- 3/4 cup room temp butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp grated lemon peel
- 2 large eggs
- 1 3/4 cups self rise flour
- 2 cups plain yogurt
- 3 cups sliced hulled strawberries (about 1 pound).



Directions

For curd:

Combine first 4 ingredients in large microwave-safe bowl. Place bowl in microwave and cook on high until butter melts, whisking every minute, about 3 minutes. Remove from microwave; cool 5 minutes. Beat eggs in small bowl to blend. Whisk half of butter mixture into eggs. Return mixture to same large bowl. Place in microwave and cook on high until curd is slightly thickened but not boiling, whisking every minute, about 4 minutes (curd will continue to thicken when chilled). Transfer curd to medium bowl. Press plastic wrap onto surface. Chill until firm, at least 1 day and up to 1 week.

Brain Yoga helps with neural connections that help memory and other gray matter functions. Simply take your left hand and make a fist extending your thumb. Do the same with your right hand, except extend your pinky.



Diana Mitchell
Elections Coordinator

Now switch--left fist with extended pinky, right fist with extended thumb. Not so easy? Keep going. Your brain will thank you!

SOE Staff Notes

Karen Williams, Elections Records Manager, completed her studies to be awarded her national C.E.R.A. (Certified Elections/Registration Administrator).

Congratulations to Cory, Elections Records Specialist I, and Lerin Logan, our newlyweds!

Thomas "TJ" James, Election Systems Manager, and his wife Lorraine welcomed their new granddaughter, Zoey Scott, on April 4th!



For syrup:

Combine sugar and lemon juice in small bowl. Whisk until sugar dissolves.

For cake:

Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter 8x8x2-inch metal baking pan. Using electric mixer, beat butter in large bowl until smooth. Add sugar and lemon peel and beat until fluffy. Beat in 1 egg, then half of flour; repeat. Transfer batter to prepared baking pan.

Bake cake until tester inserted into center comes out clean, about 25 minutes. Place pan with cake on rack. Using slender wooden skewer, poke holes all over top of cake. Spoon syrup over cake in several additions, allowing syrup to be absorbed each time. Cool cake completely. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and let stand at room temperature.)

Whisk yogurt and 1/2 cup lemon curd in small bowl to blend. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

Cut cake into squares. Top with lemon curd cream; spoon berries alongside. Garnish with mint, if desired.



2017 Legislation In Review

The Florida Legislature ended their 2017 Legislative Session Monday May 8th to close the books on the budget. However, at the time of publication, the Governor has the option to veto the budget and call members back for a Special Session so stay tuned.

To give you an idea of the complexity of the process, every session thousands of bills are introduced but only a few hundred make it through the process to the Governor's desk for final action.

Every bill impacts our lives at every level including local governments, schools, environment, health care, taxes, and of course, elections. This year of 100 election related

Curing A Vote-By-Mail Ballot

On October 3, 2016, the Florida Democratic Party filed a lawsuit asking whether the current law that allows for the rejection of vote-by-mail ballots with a voter's signature that does not match their signature in their voter registration file is unconstitutional. The issue, as presented, is that without a means to "cure" the signature, this law violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.

Past legislation allowed for voters that failed to sign their ballots at all to have the opportunity to "cure" the ballot by completing an affidavit. The main argument presented in the complaint was that no such cure is allowed for voter's whose ballots were rejected for signature mismatch. This case was granted an order of stay and the judge ordered that county elections offices should provide cures for mismatched signatures for the 2016 General Election.

The Legislature then took up the issue and created new legislation that would allow a voter whose vote-by-mail

bills House Bill 105, Vote By Mail, was the only one to make it to the Governor's desk.

Several bills among those that did not pass would have eased the restoration of civil rights, including the right to vote to felons who completed their terms of sentence including parole or probation.

A citizen initiative petition to amend the constitution pertaining to the restoration of civil rights is currently circulating for placement on the ballot for 2018.



Susan Caplowe
Outreach Specialist

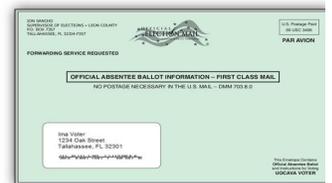
ballot was rejected due to their signature not matching the signature in their voter record to cure it.

The bill CS/HB 105 passed and will become law once signed. This bill allows for a voter to complete a cure affidavit if the signature on their vote-by-mail ballot does not match and their ballot is in danger of being rejected by the canvassing board.

There is even a "cure" for the cure, if that signature still doesn't match the voter can submit an approved form of identification confirming their identity.

For more information about the lawsuit, click [here](http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/electionlaw/litigation/FloridaDemocraticPartyv.Detzner.php) or visit <http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/electionlaw/litigation/FloridaDemocraticPartyv.Detzner.php>.

For more information about the bill click [here](http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2017/105) or visit <http://www.flsenate.gov/Session/Bill/2017/105>.



Happy Birthday Election Team Members!

- **Happy Birthday to 226 May celebrants!** Justin Cooper turns 18 and Gloria Priest turns 87!
- **Happy June Birthdays to 205 lovely people!** Corey Kelley turns 18 and Rudolph Watson turns 87!
- **Happy Birthday to 257 July babies!** Terri Belton turns 21 and Zubie Metcalf turns 86!

LeonVotes.org



Thomas "TJ" James,
Elections Systems Manager

Technology Talk from TJ

WannaCry and Other Ransomware Attacks

How to prevent ransomware attacks on Microsoft Windows computers:

1. Apply the latest Microsoft security patches for this particular flaw
2. Make sure anti-virus programs are up to date
3. Make backups or copies of your data
4. Scrutinize links and files contained in emails (don't open emails and attachments from unknown sources)
5. Only download software from trusted sources

If you have been attacked:

1. Do not pay the ransom (there is no guarantee you will get your files back)
2. Contact a local IT support service (i.e. Geek Squad) or law enforcement

The national Fidget Spinner Craze has made its way to our area and into our schools.

Fidget devices have the potential to help those who suffer from conditions such as ADHD and anxiety. However, that potential is marred by those who use or react to them as distractions rather than tools. Thoughtful use can be helpful and appropriate.



Voter Outreach:



Monique Duncan-Jones
Outreach Coordinator

Did You Know?

Supervisor of Elections Mark S. Earley is proud to continue a long tradition in Leon County of participating in the Naturalization Ceremonies held every other month at the United States Courthouse,

Northern District of Florida, in Tallahassee. During the ceremony, each new citizen is encouraged to register to vote while our staff stands at the ready to assist. On average, there are between 60 to 75 petitioners per ceremony with approximately 30 to 40 who register to vote at that time.

Each July, our office humbly participates in two Naturalization Ceremonies. By far the most special one is held on July 4th when we join the community to Celebrate America at Tom Brown Park with our patriotic voter registration booth and activities. Traditionally a group of 13 petitioners, a number that symbolizes the original 13 colonies, are naturalized during this event

where they take the Oath of Allegiance and are offered the opportunity to register to vote.

Every Naturalization Ceremony is a refreshing, awe-inspiring moment in which participants affirm and behold their allegiance to the United States of America. Participants have a unique opportunity to engage with a diverse group of individuals who have migrated to our great Nation to fulfill their unique desires to become United States citizens.



Special Naturalization Ceremony is held each July 4th in Tom Brown Park.

All new citizens are encouraged to further enrich our society by retaining and generously sharing their own individual cultures when in the course of building new relationships.

