Supervisor’s Message

Springing Into Action

Thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate with us during our Election Worker Open House in February. All of our departments had a blast interacting with our election workers and sharing stories of the past election cycle! Please visit our Facebook page for more pictures from our Open House.

Springing forward, all departments are engaging in plans for the 2018 Election Cycle. We will be reviewing and updating our procedures, analyzing our equipment, and sharing best practices with other election officials so we can continue to enhance the voting experience in future elections.

Our Training Department is putting a call out for new election workers. If you have a friend or family member who is interested in working at the polls in 2018, please guide them to our website: www.CollierVotes.com where they can apply to become an Election Worker. We will begin hosting orientations in the fall.

Learn more about what everyone on the Elections Team is doing in this edition of News & Views!
Voter Education

Educating Our Future Voters

Heather Wysocki
Voter Education Coordinator

Our office is booked with voter education activities daily!

We have relaunched our partnership with the local libraries, booked voter registration drives at weekly farmers markets, and we will visit several elementary and middle schools throughout Collier for their Sunshine State Young Reader Award elections.

Visit www.CollierVotes.com to learn more about where we will be over the next few months.

While you are visiting our website, check out our new-and-improved sections on voter information and important dates and deadlines for the upcoming 2018 Election Cycle. It is never too late to get yourself prepared for future elections and our website offers everything you need to prepare yourself for 2018.

Vote-by-Mail Updates

Why Your Signature Is So Important

Each election our office receives several returned voted ballots wherein the voter has either forgotten to sign the affidavit on the back of the return envelope, or their signatures do not match the signature we have on file. Florida has statutorily provided a “cure” for voters who forget to sign their ballots and during the 2016 General Election, a court ordered the Supervisors of Elections to offer a similar cure to voters who signed their ballots with a signature that does not match the signature used when registering to vote.

The Florida Legislature has taken up a bill that would make this cure a part of Florida law during the 2017 Legislative Session. We will continue to monitor the progress of this bill and keep our voters informed of any changes. For more information on signature cures, please visit our website www.CollierVotes.com, navigate to the Vote-by-Mail section, and click on “Signature Affidavit.”

To update your signature, please complete and sign a Florida Voter Registration Application found on our website. Questions? Call (239) 252-VOTE.

Candidate Qualifying

The Change of Political Party Balance

The 2016 General Election in Collier was held with the Republican Party having a 2-1 edge over the Democratic Party in voter registration. While Republican dominance seems normal for Collier, it wasn’t always so.

In 1960, Collier’s population was only 15,753. During this time, Democrats were in control with 81% of the registered voters. Change was in the wind when the vote for president had 60% of Collier voting for Nixon over JFK. In 1960, Collier also saw the first Republicans elected to county office: Wesley Downing being elected to County Commission District 3 and Bruce Boynton to School Board District 3 (School Board positions were partisan in Florida until 2000).

In 1970, the population reached 38,000 with Democratic registration dropping to 59%. Republicans gained control of a majority of County Commission and School Board seats for the first time; however, it wasn’t until 1976 Bill Reagan became the first Republican elected as a Constitutional Officer, winning the race for Clerk of Courts. The trend toward Republican rule continued in the county with the GOP claiming over 50% of the registered voters in 1978. At this time, the county’s population was pushing 75,000 residents.

The 1980’s saw the final transfer of power to Republicans in Collier. Just over 40,000 voters were registered in 1980 with 53% being Republican and about 40% being Democratic. The last Democratic County Commissioner and School Board Members were elected in 1980 with the last two Democratic Constitutional Officers - Sheriff Aubrey Rogers and Property Appraiser Sam Colding, who were elected in 1984.

Since the 1980’s, party percentages have been sliding with the increase of No Party Affiliation and Minor Party registrations (7.1% in 1990 to over 25% today). Could another shift occur in Collier?
**ELECTION SERVICES**

**Maintenance Mode**

As we shift from election mode to maintenance mode, there is one thing that remains constant; we are always looking for ways to improve the election process.

The Election Services Department is currently working on a long list of projects and finding ways to fine-tune and improve our current processes.

We were excited to host two of our vendors, ES&S and VR Systems, in April. The two companies stopped by to share some of their new technologies aimed at improving the voting experience during future elections.

**Training News**

**Election Worker Recruitment**

In preparing for the 2018 Election Cycle, there are many adjustments we will be making in our office due to legislative changes. We are all still waiting to see the results of the decisions made by the legislature. Stay tuned as we continue to watch the results of the 2017 Legislative Session.

There are three elections planned for the 2018 Election Cycle: the City of Naples Election on February 6, which only affects seven precincts; the August 28 Primary Election; and finally, the November 6 General Election.

We will begin conducting New Election Worker Orientations in September. If you know anyone who may be interested in working at the polls next year, please encourage them to fill out an application at www.CollierVotes.com under the “Become An Election Worker” page.

Also, congrats to Donna Beecher (pictured right). Donna attended our Election Worker Open House and won one of our contests guessing that we scanned 180,000 Vote-by-Mail ballot pages; the closest to the 178,784 that we actually scanned collectively in all three 2016 elections!

**Customer Service**

**List Maintenance**

Customer Service is diligently working to keep accurate and current voter registration records by conducting our biennial list maintenance project.

This project is implemented during odd-numbered years and helps keep our voter registration database as up-to-date as possible. We begin this process by sending address confirmation cards when the post office notifies us of a change in address. If you get mail from us, it is important for voters to respond accordingly. Address changes can have a direct impact on your voter record affecting your ballot style and even your precinct location on Election Day.

We encourage voters to be proactive in helping us maintain precise and up-to-date voter registration records by contacting our office and updating any address changes. Please visit www.CollierVotes.com and choose the tab “Update Voter Registration Information” or call us at (239) 252-VOTE (8683) to make your updates today! We are always available and eager to serve our voters!
SPOTLIGHT: SPOKESPERS FOR FREEDOM

In February, we were proud to attend a ceremony hosted by our VFW district honoring students who were considered “outstanding spokespersons for freedom.” Congratulations to Savannah Nocera of Palmetto Ridge High School and Keshawn Davis of North Naples Middle School for their speeches that focused on democratic responsibilities as Americans!

Savannah’s speech moved us as someone who understands and takes her civic responsibility to vote seriously: “As an individual who was devastated by the discovery of being ineligible to vote by just weeks, I am completely appalled by those who are eligible to place their opinions forth to benefit our country, yet refuse to do so.”

Keyshawn’s speech makes it obvious that his mother – one of our dedicated election workers – has instilled the importance of voting in him: “The America I believe in feels patriotic. It feels like the appreciation in a citizen’s heart as they exercise their voting privilege to choose their government officials.”

Congrats to these fine students! We are proud to see them already engaged in the electoral process!

IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

Everglades City Municipal: November 28, 2017
Primary Election: August 28, 2018

City of Naples Municipal: February 6, 2018
General Election: November 6, 2018

Visit us on the web: www.CollierVotes.com