In August and November, voters countywide will be asked to select candidates to represent them in several local positions including county commission and school board. Local elections are extremely important as they shape our community and directly impact our citizens, which is why we are asking our voters “what is important to you?” There is something for everyone on the ballot in 2018 and in order for a government to function, citizens must take a role in shaping it.

Make sure to connect with us on social media to receive up-to-date information from our office, and share your enthusiasm about voting by using the hashtag: #CollierVotesLocal.

More information from all of our departments can be found in this edition of News & Views!
Voter Education

Celebrating our Future Voters

Heather Doane
Voter Education Coordinator

We wrapped up 2017 with our Art for Democracy contest and our Fifth Annual High School Voter Registration Challenge.

Art for Democracy invites students in all grades to submit a piece of artwork representing what democracy means to them. Thanks to a generous grant through Champions For Learning and their Chuck Mohlke Endowment Fund, we are able to offer the winning high school student a $500 scholarship and the “best in show” art department a $500 award.

Our winners this year are Bianca Bernstein of Mason Classical Academy and the Gulfview Middle School Art Department. The top 12 student artworks from our 2016 and 2017 contests will be featured in an election calendar distributed at our community outreach events across Collier County.

We also just finished our Fifth Annual High School Voter Registration Challenge, announcing Golden Gate High School as the winner! For the second year in a row, the Titans have received more pre-registrations and registrations than any other Collier County high school, with 258 received. They also crushed their own previous winning number of 175 registrations.

Overall, 2017 was a great year for our future voters! We visited over 60 different public, private and charter schools; conducted over 40 mock and student government elections; and collected over 1,200 registrations and pre-registrations.

In total, we estimated that we interacted with nearly 10,000 students throughout this past year!

Vote-by-Mail Updates

Busy Start to 2018

It is so exciting kicking off 2018 in election mode! Our office has already mailed over 3,000 ballots to voters eligible to vote in the City of Naples Election and that number continues to grow!

If you want to cast your ballot by mail this year, you can easily visit www.CollierVotes.com to order your Vote-by-Mail ballot ahead of the Primary and General Elections!

Don’t forget to also make any updates to your name, address and signature. Those three pieces of your voter registration are incredibly important when you mail in your voted ballot!

Reminder: If you are serving as an election worker in 2018 and are working outside of your home precinct, our office will automatically send a Vote-by-Mail ballot to you ahead of the election.

Candidate Qualifying

Local Judicial Races Coming in 2018

Florida’s court system is separated into five tiers, the top tier being the Florida Supreme Court which has seven members appointed by the governor. Beneath the Florida Supreme Court are five regional District Courts of Appeal. Collier County is covered by the 2nd District Court of Appeal which sits in Lakeland, Florida and has 16 justices. Court of Appeal Judges are appointed by the governor and they, like all judges, serve six-year terms. Supreme Court and Appellate Judges are covered by judicial retention, which means that at the end of each six-year term of office, their names are automatically placed on the ballot; giving voters a chance to vote to retain them. If a majority of voters fail to vote for retention, the judge will be replaced by a new appointee. All judges must retire at the age of 70, although depending when their birthday falls, they may be able to finish their term.

Our local judges are divided into Circuit and County Court Judges. Collier is in the 20th Judicial Circuit which includes Collier, Lee, Charlotte and Hendry counties. Both Circuit Court and County Court Judges are directly elected by the voters, although the governor can appoint judges to fill vacancies. Circuit Court Judges must run circuit-wide, whereas County Court Judges run in their respective counties. The difference between the two courts is the type of cases they hear. In its simplest form: a County Court Judge can sentence you to a maximum of a year in jail, whereas a Circuit Court Judge can sentence you to death. The 20th Judicial Circuit has 31 judges serving the four counties and our County Court has six judges. In 2018, there are 15 Circuit Court Judges up for election and three County Court Judges. It is rare when incumbent judges are challenged at re-election. The qualifying period for judicial candidates closes on May 4, 2018, the same date as the qualifying period for federal office.
Training News

ExpressVote vs. iVotronic

We hope everyone had a very happy introduction to 2018! The New Year has proved to be a busy one for the Training Department. We recently received new ADA-compliant equipment to replace the iVotronic machines. ExpressVotes are ballot marking devices that may be used by voters with disabilities to assist them in marking their ballot. Similar to the iVotronic, the ExpressVote functions as a touch screen; however, votes are not tabulated on the device. Instead, voters mark their ballot selections using the ExpressVote and a ballot is then printed to be scanned and tabulated via the DS200.

Additionally, the DS200 optical scanner will now transmit the tabulated results at the end of Election Night wirelessly. This means, no more modeming in by phone line.

Currently, we are working on updates to all of our training materials. We are excited to see all the changes come to fruition during the February 6 City of Naples Election.

Happy New Year from all of us in the Training Department – it’s going to be a good one!

Election Services

Election Worker Supplies

The Election Services Department has teamed up with the Training Department staff to review our current procedures and make modifications ensuring that our election workers are equipped for the 2018 Election Cycle. We are also developing new staging and handling procedures for the new ExpressVote machines.

We look forward to seeing how the new election equipment, supplies and procedures come together to provide a smooth day for our election workers and enhance the voting experience in 2018!

Customer Service

Have You Registered to Vote Online?

The Florida Online Voter Registration website (www.RegisterToVoteFlorida.gov) has been working wonderfully! Online voter registration, which launched on October 1, 2017, is user-friendly, accessible in English and in Spanish, and is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Online voter registration applications are submitted immediately and users receive confirmation that their submission was successful. Once the information is verified and the application is deemed to be complete, our office will issue a voter information card.

As a security measure, there are required identification items that must be provided. The online application process requires a Florida Driver License or Florida ID number and the issue date, as well as the last four digits of your social security number. The additional safeguard assists in protecting against someone else fraudulently using another’s identity to register to vote. If the applicant is unable to provide the required identification information, they may still use the website; however, the applicant will be directed to print out and complete a paper voter registration application which must be signed and then delivered by mail or in-person to the Collier County Supervisor of Elections office.

The online voter registration application website can also be accessed at www.CollierVotes.com.
**SPOTLIGHT: NEW STAFF!**

*Robert Cruz, GIS/I.T. Support Specialist*

Originally from Duluth, Minnesota, Robert moved to Miami when he was 10.

Robert attended American Intercontinental University (AIU) in Fort Lauderdale and received his Bachelor of Science in Information Technology. Robert served 10 years in the United States Coast Guard doing search and rescue and Federal Law enforcement. After his service in the Coast Guard, he served 10 years as a Corrections Sergeant for the Collier County Sheriff’s Office.

Prior to coming to the SOE, Robert was a K-12 Computer Science Teacher working in both public and private schools in Collier County.

In his free time, Robert enjoys spending time with his daughter and family on the east coast. On the weekends you can find him at the beach, spending time with his daughter outdoors or at a sporting event. Please join us in welcoming Robert to the Elections Team!

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**IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES**

City of Naples Municipal: February 6, 2018  
Primary Election: August 28, 2018  
General Election: November 6, 2018

#CollierVotesLocal

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Superintendent of Elections
Jennifer Edwards