



Election News



*From the desk of
Lori Edwards . . .*

It's been a busy summer, and with municipal elections underway, fall is shaping up to be even busier! Winter Haven held elections September 8th and October 6th, and with three other cities holding elections in November with potential run-offs in December, there will be at least one election each month for the rest of the year! Congratulations to the **City Clerks** of all of Polk County's municipalities, who are the "supervisors" of their city's elections. They're doing a great job learning the complex in's and out's of election planning.

I'd also like to congratulate **Christine Goding**, our Deputy Supervisor of Elections, who recently earned the designation of Certified Election/Registration Administrator (CERA). The designation is earned by completing a series of 12 professional education courses through a partnership with Auburn University and the Election Center, a national non-profit association of election officials. Christine joins staff members **Barbara Osthoff**, Assistant Supervisor of Elections, and **Judy Walker**, Director of Community Services, who earned their CERA designations in 2008. Congratulations to all!

*Lori Edwards
Supervisor of Elections*

November Elections

Residents of the Cities of **Fort Meade, Lakeland, and Mulberry**: Mark your calendars for Tuesday, **November 3rd**. The polls will be open in these cities from **7 am to 7 pm** that day for their municipal elections.



Polling location information and sample ballots are available at www.polkelections.com. Click on your city under "Election News" in the center of the page.

To vote by mail, call us at 534-5888 or visit us on the web at www.polkelections.com to request your ballot. Look for the "Vote by Mail" icon in the column on the right. If you submitted an "all elections" absentee ballot request last year, you'll receive your ballot automatically.

Outreach and Education

Even though there are no countywide elections this year, our Outreach and Education Department has already participated in more than 100 voter outreach and education events in 2009, with no plans to slow down. Their primary mission is to provide convenient and accessible voter registration and information to our citizens through registration drives, equipment demonstrations, speeches, children's programs, parades, and a variety of other activities. This department also oversees our Media Relations program, providing election information to media sources to ensure Polk County's citizens receive accurate, timely information. And if that's not enough, this department is also charged with coordinating our Early Voting program, which is growing in popularity each year. In 2008 more than 71,084 voters took advantage of this convenient voting option. Our Outreach team staffed, supplied, and managed six early voting sites in five different cities for twelve 14-hour days before each election. This busy department is led by **Judy Walker**, Director of Community Services, and staffed by amazing team members **Matt Hinton** and **Victoria Reynolds**.





A New Perspective

My name is **Anna Mincey**. I live in Winter Haven with my husband and our two-year-old son. I am a Russian immigrant from Uzbekistan (a part of the former Soviet Union). I became a US citizen on July 4, 2008. One of the first things I did was register to vote.

My first time voting was at an August primary election. I voted at my precinct (All Saint's Academy), late in the afternoon. It was a very positive experience. Even after a long day all the poll workers were nice and professional.

As for the Presidential Election, I voted early at the Gil Jones Plaza in Winter Haven. Once again, it was late in the afternoon – it was the first day the early voting hours were extended until 7 pm. And the workers were just as friendly and courteous.

Both times I was very excited about voting. I studied my sample ballots and made my choices beforehand. I come from a third world country with no democracy and very few human rights. I really appreciate my right to vote now. And the poll workers I came in contact with while voting definitely made me feel that my vote matters.

Have You Used Your Coupons?



If you attended our Election Worker Appreciation Event in March, you received a goodie bag and booklet full of discount coupons from area businesses, our community partners. We'd like to know if you found those coupons valuable, and hear when and where you used them. Call us at 534-5858 or e-mail electionworker@polkelections.com to share your experience.



Need a Speaker for Your Club or Association?

Presentations are available on registering to vote, voting rights, and other topics. Call Judy Walker or Lori Edwards at 534-5888.

Keeping Voter Rolls Current

If you or someone you know received a postcard from our office this summer, you were involved in our "list maintenance" process. Federal and state laws require us to contact voters who may have moved to make sure we have accurate information about where they live. The ballot each voter receives in an election is determined by their residence address, so it's important that our records are up to date. Keeping voter records current also has other benefits. Fewer address changes can help keep lines shorter at the polls on election day, and reduce costs for updating voter records after each election. More correct addresses also means fewer pieces of undeliverable mail for the post office to handle, making us eligible for bulk mail postage rates, a significant savings over regular first class mail rates. As an organization that sends out well over 300,000 pieces of mail each election year, those savings can really add up!