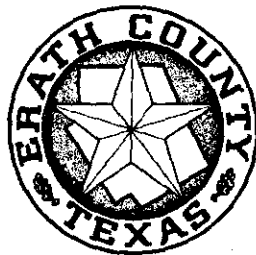


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Gwinda Jones, County Clerk  
Erath County Clerk  
100 W. Washington  
Stephenville, Texas 76401

Office (254) 965-1482  
Fax (254) 965-5732  
countyclerk@co.erath.tx.us

December 8, 2009

Hope Andrade  
Secretary of State  
P.O. Box 12060  
Austin, TX 78711-2060

Dear Ms. Andrade,

Erath County had the privilege of participating in the pilot program using countywide election precincts under House Bill 719 for the November 3, 2009 Constitutional Amendment Election. This was the second time Erath County used Vote Centers, and it was again very well received. Our voters enjoy the flexibility Vote Centers bring to elections; the freedom to vote at any location is a welcomed convenience. For months after participating in the pilot program for the 2008 Presidential Election, many people expressed their pleasure at being able to vote at any voting location and hoped to have that option in future elections. During the preparation process for the 2009 Constitutional Amendment Election we were again met with continued support of our participation in the Vote Center program.

Erath County has for many years consolidated its polling places for the Constitutional Amendment Election down to four locations, one located in each commissioner precinct. The use of Vote Centers gave our voters the option of using any of the four locations. Our records show 78% of the voters that voted in commissioner precinct 1 voted at a location outside of precinct 1, 37% of the voters that voted in commissioner precinct 2 voted at a location outside of precinct 2, 22% of the voters that voted in commissioner precinct 3 voted at a location outside of precinct 3, and 69% of the voters that voted in commissioner precinct 4 voted at a location outside of precinct 4. These numbers are a clear indication that although the Vote Center concept is new, Erath County voters are taking advantage of the convenience to vote at any location.

The results of Erath County Vote Center Survey in the Constitutional Amendment Election show that 55% of voters surveyed selected the voting location nearest to their home, while 45% of voters chose locations because of convenience (55% closest to home, 20% work route, 14% shopping route and 11% just happened by). The survey also demonstrated that 99% of those surveyed like the Vote Center concept and would like to see Vote Centers used for all future elections.

In comparison, the results of the Erath County Vote Center Survey for the 2008 Presidential Election indicated that 65% of voters surveyed selected the voting location nearest to their home, while 34% of voters chose locations because of convenience (65% closest to home, 19% work route, 2% shopping route and 5% just happened by). The shift was slight, but 10% of the voters

shifted from closest to home to voting at a location of convenience. As more people become aware of the option to vote at any location, this number should increase even more.

A comparison of voter turnout for the past several years shows a surprising trend. Early voting turnout for General Elections in Erath County is on the rise. In the 2004 General Election 49% of voters voted early, 52% of voters voted early in the 2006 General Election, and 58% voted early in the 2008 General Election. The number of voters voting early in General Elections is gradually growing. Surprisingly, early voting numbers in Erath County are on the decline for Constitutional Amendment Elections. Erath County records show that 43% of voters voted early in the 2005 Constitutional Amendment Election, 41% of voters voted early in the 2007 Constitutional Amendment Election and 35 % of voters voted early in the 2009 Constitutional Amendment Election. The use of Vote Centers had no affect on this trend.

As a suggestion for future use of countywide precincts, Erath County would like the option to use Vote Centers for Primary Elections when both parties hold a Joint Primary Election and agree to the use of Vote Centers. As a result of Vote Centers in the past two countywide elections, Erath County voters will be confused as to the correct precinct in which to vote. Erath County aggressively addressed this issue during the Constitutional Amendment Election and will continue to do so leading up to the primary. Erath County voters have embraced the Vote Center concept, making consistency of polling places a problem. Consistency is very important in the continued success of the Vote Center Program, and Erath County would like the option to use Vote Centers for all countywide elections, including primaries. Erath County would like to see legislation making Vote Centers an option for the primary when appropriate criteria are met.

After the conclusion of the Constitutional Amendment Election, the Erath County Clerk's Office spoke with the election judges and clerks that worked at each of the Vote Centers. They again enthusiastically supported the Vote Center concept and Erath County's new online poll book system. The judges appreciated the simplicity of the electronic poll book, label printers, and scanners to register voters. Because of the electronic poll book and scanners, there is no risk of choosing the wrong ballot style. This system increased the speed of registration and allowed for added number of voters. When asked if they would like to return to paper books and the old system, the election judges and clerks said absolutely not.

Enclosed as part of our post-election report you will find the 2009 Constitutional Amendment Election Spreadsheet that breaks down the votes cast by precinct as well as by Vote Center, 2008 General Election Spreadsheet, 2006 General Election Spreadsheet, a Spreadsheet containing the 2005, 2007 and 2009 Constitutional Amendment Elections split by precinct, letters of support for the Vote Center Program by both the Democrat and Republican Parties and our Hispanic Business Council.

Erath County was pleased to again be a part of the Vote Center Program and hope to see future legislation making Vote Centers a permanent addition for all county wide elections. If you have any questions about the election or the information provided, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Gwinda Jones  
Erath County Clerk