

# CANVASSING KANSAS

An update on election news from Kansas Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh

## SOS staff negotiating contracts

Various staff members in the Secretary of State's office are currently involved in the review of four contracts. Three are existing contracts being reviewed for renegotiation, and one is a new contract for electronic poll books. The contract process is overseen by the ten-member HAVA Steering Committee, which includes our consultant, Jim Minihan, who was instrumental in the bid process for the original ELVIS contract and the five voting equipment contracts.

The first was the ELVIS contract. Preliminary discussions began in the fall of 2008 to determine whether and how to renegotiate the voter registration contract with Election Systems & Software (ES&S).

The current contract, signed in March 2005, is in place for five

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## July news conference kicks off online voter registration

Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh and Kansas Secretary of Revenue Joan Wagnon held a joint press conference July 28 to publicly announce the online voter registration program, Online VR.

Online VR was developed by the Department of Revenue's information technology staff, Division of Motor Vehicles staff, members of the SOS staff, and technicians at ES&S, the voter registration database vendor. The project was a culmination of a series of enhancements to voter registration in Kansas that included electronic motor-voter and online change of address (see *Canvassing Kansas*, June 2009, page 1).

With online VR, anyone with a current and valid Kansas driver's license or nondriver's identification card may go online and submit an electronic voter registration application or, as the case may be, a change of address. Once the person's eligibility is verified, they enter information required for voter registration, and that information is merged with name and address information already on file with the DMV and the digitized signature collected through the driver's license process. The electronic records are batched and transmitted to the ELVIS voter registration database, and within one or two days they are received in the CEO's office via the Agency Central feature of ELVIS. The CEO must review each record and accept or reject it; voter registration records are never added, deleted or altered by the state election office.

As a test, the system was "soft launched" with no public announcement approximately two weeks before the press conference. By the time of the announcement, more than 100 people had discovered the site and successfully registered or changed their addresses.

At the press conference, Thornburgh said, "An online voter registration application is the next step in mak-

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# COUNTY NEWS

## Ensley continues leadership role in IACREOT

Congratulations again to Shawnee County Election Commissioner Libby Ensley for her continued ascension through the ranks at IACREOT (International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers). Libby has been active in the organization for a number of years, and in the September 2008 issue of this newsletter we reported that as IACREOT secretary she had been appointed IACREOT's representative on the Board of Advisors.

This year, Libby was chosen Second Vice President of IACREOT. In her new capacity she will work with IACREOT's budget and the various committees that serve the organization. She will also continue on the EAC Board of Advisors. Her plan is to run next year for First Vice President, a term which will run from September 1, 2010 through August 31, 2011. After that she hopes to become President, serving a term from September, 2011 through August, 2012.

One of her principal duties as President will be to organize IACREOT's summer conference in 2012. Anyone who has been involved in planning a conference knows there are innumerable details that require attention, and planners must constantly adapt to last-minute changes.

Looking ahead to the planning process, Libby invites her colleagues in the counties across the state of Kansas to get involved. She would like to see a strong contingent of Kansas CEOs at the summer conference in 2012, and there will be opportunities to get involved in the organization and planning. Anyone needing more information about how to get involved in IACREOT should contact Libby.

## Johnson County wins awards

The JoCoPoLo marketing campaign designed in 2008 by the Johnson County Election Commissioner's Office has won two awards. The National Association of Counties (NACo) awarded the program its 40th annual Achievement Award at its 2009 annual conference in Nashville July 26. Also, the Election Center gave its 2009 Best Practices Stars and Stripes Award to the program.

JoCoPoLo refers to a package of initiatives designed to increase voter participation, promote advance voting, and remind voters to check their polling place locations before election day. Voters in the county were sent information to increase their awareness of the upcoming election, election workers attended various public events, and public service announcements were run on local media. The Web site had a feature allowing voters to print advance ballot application forms or find satellite advance voting locations.

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## CANVASSING KANSAS

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**RON THORNBURGH**  
Kansas Secretary of State

Dear friends,

Last month, I had the opportunity to travel abroad to meet with governmental officials in China and India as a part of the Aspen-Rodel Fellowship in Public Service. For more than a week, we met with high-ranking officers and political leaders to learn about the culture, people, and of course, the make-up of their respective governmental systems.

Among these representatives from across the United States and the world, the subject naturally turned to the electoral process. Most of you have no doubt heard the stories of how challenging the simple act of casting a ballot can be in other parts of the world, and of how many citizens of these nations long for the opportunity to participate in a free and fair democracy. Surrounded by these people, standing in places like Tiananmen Square, this really begins to hit home.

Now that I have returned to Kansas, I've continued to follow international elections with a renewed interest. As stories pour in from Afghanistan, where widespread fraud and claims of intimidation threaten to bring their recent election to a standstill, and Iran, where President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has repeatedly called for his unsuccessful opponent to be prosecuted and jailed for supposedly collaborating to overthrow the government, I am reminded of how fortunate we are to live in a country, and a state, where citizens can cast their vote without fear.

The reason Kansans can continue to have confidence in their elections process is because of people like you. Our county clerks and elections officers are among the best in the nation – routinely executing successful, secure, and uniform elections that have set the national standard. Because of you, we can hear these stories from across the globe and take comfort that it will never, could never, happen here. That is certainly something to be proud of, and I want to thank you again for all that you do for the people of Kansas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron".

**RON THORNBURGH**  
Secretary of State

## **MEOC planning in final stages**

There's still plenty of time to register for the Midwest Election Officials Conference. As reported earlier, the 2009 MEOC, or MEOC VI, will be held at the Marriott in Overland Park December 6-9. The four-state planning team, composed of staff members from the Secretary of State's offices in Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska and Kansas, meets regularly by conference call and occasionally face-to-face at the hotel to plan the conference.

There's still much work to be done, but the conference is taking shape with three months to go. A number of speakers are already under contract. At the conference we can expect to hear about the latest trends in elections, see the latest technology in the industry, hear about interesting experiences by election officials in other places and make connections with our colleagues in neighboring states.

As of early August, more than 80 individuals from county election offices in the four-state region had registered, and by far the biggest contingent was from Kansas. We are proud of the fact that our state has always had the highest level of participation, and we'd like to keep that record going.

**Make your reservations TODAY!!!** You can make a hotel reservation by calling 1-800-228-9290 or 913-451-8000. Brochures with conference registration forms were sent earlier. If you need one, give us a call or send an e-mail and we'll make sure you get what you need.

The 2009 MEOC is being conducted at the same prices as MEOC IV in 2000, so this is a bargain no one should pass up. We hope to see you there!

## **Changes take place in Wichita County**

Karla Kay Ridder, Wichita County Clerk, passed away June 24, 2009. Karla was a lifetime Wichita County resident and graduated from Wichita County High School in 1972. Karla was first elected Wichita county clerk in November 1994 and held that position until her death. She is survived by her husband Charles M. "Chuck" Ridder, son Joshua, daughter Lexi, parents, sister, and three grandchildren. Memorials are suggested to be sent to the Wichita County Amusement Association or the Dreiling – Schmidt Cancer Institute at Hays Medical Center.

Karla's successor is Carol Cary. Carol is a native of the Texas panhandle and moved to Leoti in November 1968. Carol began her work in county government with the county appraiser's office in 1984 and transferred to the county clerk's office in December 1990. Carol has worked with former clerks Bonnie Gilmore and Karla Ridder. Good luck, Carol, and welcome aboard.

## **County news**

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One unique feature allowed a voter to go to the Web site, enter an address and receive a map to their polling place along with turn-by-turn directions. Or a voter could send a text message from a cell phone and receive a message with the name and address of their polling place.

The office also maintained an Election-Day hot line to take calls from voters who could not find the correct polling place.

Johnson County Election Commissioner Brian Newby reports that less than one-half of 1 percent of their voters voted provisional ballots in 2008, which was an improvement over past elections. Newby attributes much of this success to the JoCoPoLo program. Overall voter turnout set a record, as well as advance voting turnout, when more than half the total votes cast in the election were cast by advance ballot.

The Web site is [jocopol.com](http://jocopol.com).

## **SOS staff negotiating**

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years with five, one-year optional renewals. The first five years concludes in March 2010, so this fall the negotiations will begin so a new contract can be in place before expiration of the old one.

Second, the voting equipment contracts with ES&S and Premier (formerly Diebold) are being reviewed to determine if there are items in the contracts that need to be renegotiated. The current contracts, and the prices guaranteed in them, are in effect through the general election of November 2010, so the negotiation process will not be

*Please see **SOS staff negotiating**, page 5*

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# SOS staff take on new duties

Three members of the Elections Division in the Secretary of State's office are taking on some new, temporary duties.

Craig Bourne has been HAVA Coordinator since May 2006. Most of HAVA has been implemented and as his duties have lessened somewhat, Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh has asked Craig to begin taking on the census adjustment project. (See census article elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Bryan Caskey, Administrative Assistant in the Elections Division, is taking on a new duty that is also related to the census. He will now cover most of the duties associated with the statutory designation of the Secretary of State as the official liaison with the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Besides his regular census-related duties (including maintaining precinct maps and providing census information upon request), Bryan is coordinating with the State Library and Data Center in forming a Complete Count Committee. The Census Bureau strongly encourages states and localities to form Complete Count Committees to ensure their jurisdictions are counted as accurately as possible by the federal census. A complete count benefits the state in many ways, including grants and funding allocation formulas. Many localities in Kansas have already formed committees similar to the state committee Bryan is helping to organize.

Brad Bryant, State Election Director, is serving on the Voter Registration Modernization Design Working Group organized by the Pew Charitable Trusts. After the disputed 2000 presidential election and passage of HAVA, Pew formed a unit called Make Voting Work, which operates as part of Pew's Center on the States. The Design Working Group met in late July in Seattle and plans to meet three more times this fall to develop a plan for automating voter registration and improving the accuracy and efficiency of statewide voter registration databases.

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## SOS staff negotiating

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gin until sometime in early to mid 2010.

Kansas election officers will remember that the state originally concluded contracts with three additional vendors besides ES&S and Premier: Voting Technologies International (VTI), MicroVote and AmCad AccuPoll. VTI and AccuPoll are no longer doing business, and MicroVote did not sell any equipment in Kansas during the HAVA procurement. The SOS HAVA Steering Committee decided not to open negotiations on the MicroVote contract, although the existing contract is still valid and could be used if needed.

Finally, a new bid process will soon be opened for electronic poll books. A request for proposal (RFP) is nearly complete, and companies will be invited to bid this fall. A number of county election officers have expressed interest in electronic poll books, and the Secretary of State's office plans to have contracts in place with all vendors wishing to do business in Kansas in plenty of time to purchase and install the poll books for the 2010 election season.

Electronic poll books are not voting machines, and they are not part of the HAVA requirements, but many CEOs are applying for HAVA endowment funds from the SOS office with the intention of purchasing e-poll books. Because the endowment funds are federal HAVA funds (with the 5 percent state/county matching funds), the money will be spent by the SOS office, so it is necessary to have state contracts in place. Counties are free to make purchases off state contracts at any time, whether using HAVA endowment funds or county funds. If they are able to negotiate better prices and terms with vendors on their own, they are not required to use the state contracts, but in most cases the prices on state contracts are as good or better than anything that may be obtained individually.

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# 2010 Census

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## Adjustment project begins

The census adjustment project is based on a unique Kansas constitutional requirement that two transient groups—college students and military personnel—must be counted in the census at their places of permanent residence. The decennial U.S. Census counts people where they find them, which is not necessarily their places of permanent residence, so college students are presumed to be counted at their dormitories, apartments or wherever they live while attending college, and military personnel are presumed to be counted at their barracks or off-base housing.

Article 10, Section 1 of the Kansas Constitution requires that a mini-census be conducted with these two groups to ask them where they consider their permanent residence to be. The Kansas Legislature assigned the task of completing the census adjustment to the Office of the Secretary of State by passing K.S.A. 11-301 et seq.

The voters of Kansas adopted this provision in the Constitution in the 1988 election. Previously, the state conducted its own state census for purposes of redistricting legislative districts. The last state census was in 1988. With the adoption of the constitutional amendment, the state census was abolished and the census adjustment was initiated. The first adjustment was done in 1990 at the time of the regular decennial federal census, and the second was done in 2000. Next year's adjustment will be the third.

If a student completes a census adjustment questionnaire saying their permanent residence is back home with their parents, the adjustment process subtracts the person from the census block containing their temporary college residence (dorm or apartment) and adds them to the census block containing the address they claimed as their permanent address. It is the same way with military personnel.

The process results in three possible actions for each person:

- ◆No adjustment—The person claimed the college or military address in Kansas as their permanent residence. The federal census presumably counted them there, so no further action is taken in the census adjustment project.

- ◆Subtract/add—The person claimed another residence in Kansas as their permanent residence, so they must be subtracted from one census block and added to another.

- ◆Subtract only—The person claimed a residence in another state or country as their permanent residence, so they are subtracted from their temporary college or military address and not added into another census block in Kansas.

One feature of the adjustment that adds some complexity is that each person's racial and ethnic identity must be accounted for. The adjustment process uses the same racial and ethnic categories as the U.S. Census uses, which total 16 separate categories. Also, the adjustment process keeps track of whether a respondent is 18 years old or not, because voting age population is a component of the census and the redistricting process.

Distribution of questionnaires to the colleges and military installations will begin this fall. It is anticipated that 55 colleges and four military installations will be included. The colleges include six Regents institutions, 19 community colleges, 19 independent colleges, Washburn University, and a number of technical schools that offer degrees. The four military installations are Fort Riley, Fort Leavenworth, McConnell Air Force Base, and the U.S. Coast Guard Pay & Personnel Station in Topeka.

More than 100,000 questionnaires will be distributed during the fall of 2009 and spring of 2010. Processing and analysis of the questionnaires, database building and geocoding of addresses (assigning addresses to census blocks) will take place during 2010, and the actual recalculation of the unadjusted federal census data will be done in early 2011 by a company that provides redistricting services to the Kansas Legislature. The law requires the Secretary of State's office to report adjusted federal population data to the Legislature by July 31, 2011, so that preparations for the redistricting process may begin. Redistricting is done in the 2012 legislative session and

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# 2010 Census

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## Census status update

**B**ryan Caskey attended a regional meeting August 4 – 5 conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for State Data Center & Governor’s Liaisons. With Census Day (April 1, 2010) rapidly approaching, a wide variety of topics were discussed.

**CENSUS JOBS** – The Census Bureau is continuing to hire people in several parts of the state. In particular, the bureau is looking for applicants in southwest Kansas, where a regional office will be opened in Dodge City. The phone number applicants should call is 1-866-861-2010 or visit [www.censusjobs.gov](http://www.censusjobs.gov).

**CENSUS CHALLENGES** – Kansas faces a number of unique challenges. A few of these challenges include western Kansas agricultural areas and processing plants; recent Hispanic immigrations in southwestern Kansas; the influx of military personnel in Riley and Geary counties; and urban areas of Wichita, Topeka, and Kansas City, Kansas. If you are aware of a recent influx of new residents in your county, or of a new minority or immigrant group, please contact Bryan Caskey at the Secretary of State’s office.

**CENSUS QUESTIONNAIRE** – The theme of the 2010 Census Questionnaire is “10 Questions, 10 Minutes, for 10 years.” The Census Bureau no longer distributes the long form of the questionnaire. That data is now included in surveys that take place between decennial censuses. Every household will get the same form that will take just a few minutes to complete and return. The questions that are asked include: number of people living in residence, household relationship, tenure (own or rent), telephone number, name, gender, age/date of birth, ethnicity and race. It is important to remember that the data is collected for statistical purposes only and it is against the law for any person to disclose any data that identifies a person.

**CENSUS OFFICES** – There will be four census offices located in Kansas. The first, in Topeka, opened in January 2009. Other offices that will be open in Kansas include one in Kansas City, Wichita and Dodge City.

**WHY THE CENSUS** – The United States Constitution requires a national census every 10 years for the purpose of determining representation in the U.S. House of Representatives. In addition, over \$350 billion annually are distributed to local units of government, from the federal government, based on census population figures. That averages out to over \$1,200 for every person counted. (There is not a direct correlation, but it is informative to know how much money is at stake.) With local units of government facing budget challenges, it is vitally important for every local unit of government to get an accurate count of its population.

If you have any questions about any census program, or census data, please contact Bryan Caskey at (785) 296-3488 or [bryanc@kssos.org](mailto:bryanc@kssos.org).

### Adjustment project

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the new districts are used for the elections held later that year.

It is important to note that the adjusted census data are used only for redistricting of the Kansas Senate, Kansas House of Representatives, and the 10 districts of the Kansas State Board of Education. The adjusted figures are not used for drawing the four districts in the U.S. House of Representatives or for any other purpose such as funding or government grants.

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# HAVA *update*

## **HAVA Endowment Program Update:**

The deadline to submit a request has expired. There were a total of 64 county requests totaling almost \$2 million (excluding the electronic poll book amount to be determined later).

As mentioned during the start of the program, we wanted to include e-poll books on the list of approved items, but needed to go through the bid process before additional details could be provided. Our office is currently in the middle of this process and we hope to have it completed by early fall. At that time we will contact each county that expressed an interest on its endowment request to provide details (specs, cost, etc.) on all e-poll books in which we will then have under state contract. They will be given a deadline to choose a vendor and number of units.

At the completion of the e-poll book process, the Secretary of State's office (after prioritizing all approved items) will contact each county that submitted a request and inform it how much funding it will be awarded and for which items requested. There will be time allowed for counties to reconsider their request. Please keep in mind that counties will be responsible for a minimum of five percent of the cost.

Our goal is to complete the 2009 HAVA endowment program by the end of the year and have all orders delivered and training in place in early 2010.

For any additional questions please contact Craig Bourne at [Craigb@kssos.org](mailto:Craigb@kssos.org) or (785) 296-0080.

## **2008 HAVA Requirements Payments**

As mentioned at KCCEOA this past May, Kansas is eligible to receive an additional \$1,054,068 of federal appropriations. This money requires a five percent state match, in which we have already received. Additionally, we must also update our HAVA state plan and submit a series of certifications.

Initial updates to the state plan have been made by the Secretary of State's office and sent to the 2009 HAVA advisory council for comment. Once all comments are reviewed and final revisions made, we will hold a public comment period before submitting our new state plan to the Election Assistance Commission (EAC). In conjunction with this, the state of Kansas (meaning the Secretary of State) will also submit the series of required certifications.

Once EAC has approved all state requirements, we will receive the funds within a week. Kansas is also eligible for additional funds in 2009 under the same set of requirements.

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## July news conference

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ing the traditional elections process easier, faster and cheaper. As technology continues to change and evolve, it is important that we implement strategies that will allow the citizens of Kansas to register in a way that is most convenient to them, without sacrificing the security and uniformity that sets our elections system apart.”

Secretary Wagnon added, “This partnership between the Secretary of State and the Department of Revenue makes it easier for Kansans to register to vote.” Wagnon said that she was especially pleased to eliminate paper from the system and hoped the online VR and electronic motor-voter programs would help reduce provisional ballots.

Thornburgh and Wagnon said that one of the significant aspects of the program is that it is responsive to the public’s demand to conduct its business with the government electronically. Many people in today’s world, especially young people, expect to fill out forms and transact their business by computer. They sometimes question why they need to go to an office, stand in line and fill out a piece of paper in order to complete a simple, routine transaction. Online VR addresses that expectation.

The online VR site is housed on the Department of Revenue’s Web site at [www.kdor.org/voterregistration](http://www.kdor.org/voterregistration) and may also be reached through the Secretary of State’s site at [www.voteks.org](http://www.voteks.org).

The states of Arizona and Washington had already implemented online registration sites, so Kansas is the third state with such a program. The program has received notice through an article in the national newsletter *Election Administration Reports* (Volume 39, Number 14, July 6, 2009, page 4.) Other states and some election officials outside the United States have also taken note and have contacted the Secretary of State’s office for information about how the system was developed. An official representing Australia’s federal election agency, the Australian Electoral Commission, plans to visit the office on December 10 and meet with staff members from the Department of Revenue and Secretary of State’s office to discuss how a similar system might be implemented in Australia.