

# WEST VIRGINIA -ELECTION CONNECTION-

*Your source for Election News from Secretary of State Natalie E. Tennant*

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Issue 3 – October 25, 2011

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## **28 Weeks Until the May Primary!**

On Tuesday, October 25 there will be exactly 28 weeks until the May Primary! The Secretary of State's Office has distributed our calendars for the 2012 election. It has dozens of deadlines, requirements, and procedures listed. If you need more calendars, please feel free to contact us and we will get them to you as soon as possible.

## **Putnam County HAVA Grant**

This morning in Putnam County Secretary of State Natalie E. Tennant presented a Help America Vote Act (HAVA) grant totaling more than \$4,820 to make the early voting location more accessible. The grant will pay to purchase an oil cooler for the elevator of the courthouse. The oil cooler is necessary because during high volume early voting days, the hydraulic oil in the elevator gets too hot and a safety valve shuts down the elevator motor, making it very difficult or impossible for some voters to get to the early voting location. County clerks can contact HAVA Director Layna Brown in the Secretary of State's Office to discuss the grant process and how you can make your voting locations more accessible. She can be reached by email at [lbrown@wvsos.com](mailto:lbrown@wvsos.com) or by phone at (304) 558-6000. You can see more about the grant presentation event on the Secretary of State's website at [www.wvsos.com](http://www.wvsos.com).

## **Election Connection Online!**

You can see back issues of the Election Connection newsletter on the Secretary of State's website at [www.wvsos.com](http://www.wvsos.com). To view them, click on "Election Connection" under the "Secretary's Desk" heading on the front page. The issues can be seen in PDF format. If your computer cannot open a PDF file, please email Jake Glance at [jglance@wvsos.com](mailto:jglance@wvsos.com) and he will be able to email you a plain text version.

## **Statewide Voter Registration System Questions?**

To help us track and resolve issues that election officials may have with the Statewide Voter Registration System, we have set up a special email address. You can now email your questions, suggestions, or concerns regarding SVRS to [svrs@wvsos.com](mailto:svrs@wvsos.com).

## **New Voter Registration and Ballot Request Forms Now Available!**

This information is from a press release by the Federal Voting Assistance Program:

*October 20, 2011 — Arlington, Va. — The online electronic version of the revised Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is available now at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov). The FPCA registers and requests ballots for voters simultaneously. Voters can visit [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) to use the online wizard or access the PDF fillable forms. The FPCA is a standard form accepted by all 55 States and Territories for uniformed and civilian overseas voters to apply for an absentee ballot. The length of time the FPCA is valid and its completion requirements vary by State so be sure to refer to the [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) web portal or the 2012-2013 [Voting Assistance Guide](#).*

*The revised FPCA is wholly compliant with provisions of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, as amended by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act in 2009, containing space for the required information but structured in a more logical and usable flow. FVAP conducted a series of usability assessments with the previous form resulting in substantial improvements using many established best practices for election-related forms.*

*Previous versions of the form can be used by voters; however, be sure to use the current state information from [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) to ensure your local election official receives all the information required to register you and send you ballot to you. Voting Assistance Officers should send voters to [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) whenever possible and go through [proper channels](#) to obtain hardcopy forms. Overseas citizens groups should also stress using the online wizards to simplify form completion, but can [contact FVAP directly](#) to acquire hardcopy forms.*

*Voters should apply for absentee ballots in January of each year or at least 90 days before the specific election in which they want to vote. If your mailing address changes, especially between the Primary and General Elections, you will need to send in an updated FPCA.*

*[A complete 2012 election calendar is available here.](#)*

*All States and territories are required to send ballots at least 45 days before an election. If you have not received your ballot 30 days before the election, go to the [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) web portal to see if your State has an online ballot delivery system. If not, you can use the back-up write-in ballot wizard also on the [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) web portal.*

*Additionally, the 2012-2013 [Voting Assistance Guide](#) is now available at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov). This compilation of absentee voting regulations, laws, deadlines, and procedures reflects the States' changes and deadlines for the upcoming elections. An addendum to the guide providing Voting Assistance Officers with steps to offering voting assistance required by Wounded Warriors and other voters with disabilities will be available at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov) next month.*

## **Reducing Costs In Elections**

Congressman Gregg Harper (R-Mississippi), the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Elections, would like to hear from election officials on how to reduce costs. In an email, the Congressman wrote: "If there are federal mandates that are especially costly to you that you think can be changed or eliminated, please tell us what they are. If you can quantify the costs and savings involved that would be especially helpful, but it is not necessary. Any information you offer will contribute. Some election officials have given us input already, and we would like to get as many different viewpoints as possible." If you have any information you would like to pass along to him, you may contact Peter Schalestock of the House Administration Committee at (202) 225-3293 or [peter.schalestock@mail.house.gov](mailto:peter.schalestock@mail.house.gov). They are asking that you submit your information by October 31.

Of course, you can always contact the Elections Division of the West Virginia Secretary of State's Office at (304) 558-6000 at any time to discuss the efficiency of our elections.

### **Have an idea?**

Is there something that you want to see addressed in the Election Connection? The goal of this newsletter is to keep everyone up to date about challenges facing election officials in West Virginia and to inform everyone about best practices that are being put into place. If you have an idea for a topic, have a question, or if you think there is a subject that election officials around the state would be interested in, please do not hesitate to contact the Secretary of State's Office. You can contact the Elections Division by email at [elections@wvsos.com](mailto:elections@wvsos.com) or (304) 558-6000 or Jake Glance directly at [jglance@wvsos.com](mailto:jglance@wvsos.com). Your input is appreciated!