



TAEA Newsletter

Texas Association of Elections Administrators

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President

Dan Teed Appointed as Navarro County EA



Congratulations to Dan Teed for his [recent appointment as Navarro County Elections Administrator](#), succeeding long-time EA Danda Parker in that role.

Hope everyone is keeping their heads above water during this busy election cycle. For us here in Williamson County, June can't get here fast enough!

-CJD

Vice President

Prepping....

- Yvonne Ramon

Treasurer



Still recovering from my trip to Las Vegas last week....

Don't forget to mark your calendars and to make plans to attend the 36th Annual Election Law Seminar for County Election Officials. Rooms open up tomorrow morning (4/18/18) at 9 a.m. It is set for July 30 through August 1, 2018. Also, make certain that you are communicating with your neighboring counties and encouraging them to join TAEA.

Sorry so short, I am already planning for the possibility of a special election in June. (insert eye roll)

- Michele Bennett

Legislative Chair



Hello everyone! Not much to talk about this month except the weather, ain't it crazy! May early voting will start soon & I hope everyone who's having elections are prepared. We do our own programming and I have one city that's doing several charter changes and they have a 2-page, front & back ballot, then everyone else is on a single page ballot, so we had to do two different databases. Throw the May Primary Run-Off into the mix, and It's really like having 3 elections in May! Keeping all that straight keeps you on your toes!

We all have our own challenges with issues like this, but we manage to pull through, and I have no doubt we all will this time as well.

Good luck with your May elections, and try to enjoy this up & down weather!

Until next time, y'all have a good one!

- Mina Cook

Secretary

Not sure what to include for my first entry, only to say that I am excited for what lays ahead. I have already started working with Michele Bennett to make sure we have a smooth transition, and she has been quite a help. I was thrilled to be included in discussions with the Officers as they dealt with issues ranging from forms, the creation of ad hoc committees, and how the organization helps with transitions in membership status. They really work through these issues together.

I would like to express how I see my role as the Secretary of the organization. I think first and foremost it is to insure that the minutes accurately reflect the events of a given meeting. To the best of our ability we want to make sure that someone who did not attend the meeting can review them afterwards and understand what happened. That includes simple things as to what was discussed, who spoke in favor of a motion, who spoke against and what was the substance of their relative positions. Over time, these records will be a way to understand why the organization took the action and positions it did at a given meeting. Hopefully, someone will be able to reconstruct our decision making process from these minutes.

I would also offer the role of the Secretary of the board is to make sure that the actions taken by the organization are actualized. That resolutions, contracts and other official documents are executed and signed by all parties and that those records are incorporated in the minutes as necessary. I have taken heat in my past, but documentation is the key to covering your posterior, for all parties.

I look forward to working with everyone and am grateful for the opportunity to serve this great organization. Can't wait for June to get here and the last canvass of the season to be certified. Here's hoping there are no runoffs for our May Elections to spoil our July. Good Luck everyone.

- Remi Garza

Small/Rural Committee seeking members

A temporary committee for small & rural counties (less than 50,000 population) has been formed to explore & address election issues, share best practices and suggest potential planks in TAEA's overall legislative platform for 2019. Young Co. EA Lauren Sullivan will chair the committee. Any interested members can [contact her via email](#). The charter for this committee will extend to January 2019, where a status report will be given to the general membership during the Mid-Winter Conference.



Continuing Education



Every day we see a new story about the vulnerability of our voting systems. Some of these stories are reasonably accurate, others are way off base. If policy makers and the media cannot distinguish between a voting system and a voter registration system we are in trouble. If the Russians did probe, or even hack, some voter registration systems, then we have vulnerabilities in our voter registration systems that need to be addressed. However, if there were an attack on our voter registration systems, why would we respond by replacing our voting systems?

For more than 60 years, Russia has been engaged in subterfuge designed to pit American against American. Social media clearly makes that goal easier to attain. It isn't limited to elections. National Public Radio reported that only minutes after the school shooting in Florida, hundreds of bogus social media accounts from Russia were working both sides of the gun control issue trying to create more divisions within our society.

In elections, it is important that votes be counted accurately and fairly, but it is equally important that voters believe that their votes are counted accurately and fairly. Our enemies don't have to hack any voting machines, or change any votes, they merely have to make people believe that they can and wait for us to make bad decisions. Following the 2000 Presidential election, Congress passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). It mandated replacement of punch card voting systems, which actually worked well so long as the vote recorders were properly maintained. Election Officials embraced HAVA because it provided a funding mechanism for new equipment. Vendors embraced it because it opened the door to more sales. However, within the voting machine industry, it compressed a normal ten year equipment replacement cycle down to two to three years. Because we had to either spend it or lose it, nearly every jurisdiction in America replaced their voting system between 2003 & 2005. Now we are all needing to replace them again. We need to do so, not because our systems have been hacked, but because they are old and becoming unreliable.

Every voting system has its advantages and disadvantages, and because elections are run at the local level, not every system is a good fit for every jurisdiction. When we replace our aging equipment, we need to be able to have choices among systems. Texas embraces Early Voting, some states do not. With almost a quarter of our counties participating in the county wide polling place program, we are quickly moving toward Vote Centers. In this type of environment, DRE's have been, and will continue to remain the best solution for many Texas Counties. However, in today's environment, the best may not be politically acceptable.

I had hoped to be in the process of choosing a new voting system to be implemented in 2019. I would like that choice to be based upon the needs of our county. Now because of the ambiguity caused by the media, legislators, and self-proclaimed voting experts, we are going to try to keep our eSlates running a couple of more years. In the meantime, if our current system fails, then the Russians will have won.

- John Oldham



SOS 2018 Election Law Seminars:

July 30 - August 1, 2018 36th Annual Election Law Seminar for County Election Officials

Book your rooms tomorrow - Wednesday, April 18

November 28 - November 30, 2018 30th Annual Election Law Seminar for Cities, Schools, and other Political Subdivisions



Texas Senate Committee on Election Security had a hearing the first day of early voting for the Primary election. I do not know how many people were able to watch it, since that was busy time of the year, but it is very interesting. John Oldham and Heather Hawthorne did an exceptional job expressing issues and concerns that each of us has in holding an election for our county.

[Senate Select Committee on Election Security](#)

Just a SPECIAL NOTICE for the recipients of the newsletter. The association newsletter is intended for members and associates of Texas Association of Election Administrators. Those individuals who are not members or associates of the association may be removed at any time.